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the national magazine of the performing arts

# Theatre Australia



January 1979

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# #COMMENT#

## The Issue Debate

Now that NSW Premier Neville Wran has announced his government's decision to "support" a new state theatre company in New South Wales, to "find it as far as possible, encourage it and maintain it", the debate is on: What sort of company should it be? How funded? State-owned or funded by parliament? Who should lead it? Ad hoc employment of actors or a permanent company? What venue should be used? Everything aside from the fact that such a company will point in the foreseeable future, is in the making just.

Wran, from his opening address to a public seminar held in November, appears to realise that such a huge venture cannot simply be conjured out of the air by the magic wand of legislative fiat, as equally as he states quick results. His words appear to be to lay the experience and expertise of professionals already working in the state, the appointment of Robert Norton, John Bell and Harry Rippas on the same platform, not to maintain the almost exclusively theatre practitioners' influence of over two hundred, suggests the approach will work.

An interim board, consisting of Justice James McLelland, modeller/artist Giles Kygier and actor Tony Jewell (Jewell Jones), has been established, but, significantly, were not to hold their first meeting until after the public forum. The size and composition of this board is intended to give it the effectiveness of a tight team coupled with built in competence on the legal, business and theatrical fronts. It has already pledged itself to actively maintaining contact at every stage.

In that very though, even before deciding what sort of legal form the company should have, is the appointment of an artistic director. Though Justice McLelland presented a nicely phrased job-description: "We must need the cultural groups which would debate that that a person is not to be found in Australia — but, we must equally need the paradoxical view that only an Australian is equal to the task" on the question of the necessity of a prospective appointee, the feeling of the meeting was clearly in favour of an Australian. Harry Rippas argued in favour of a local on the grounds that the theatre "is the main social of the arts", Carmel Duncan felt only such a man "would create a love affair between actors and audience" and Elizabeth Kirby felt that only such an appointment could "insure a company with a national flavour". So strong was the ground swell that a motion proposing it "should be actually put, but evoked on the point of order that only discussion not proposal had been the announced purpose of the meeting.

As we're educating — which allows the

right to proffer opinion as well as reflect it — it should be said that this migration, as it always has, supports the case for an Australian Theatre. The arguments for merely appointing the "best available" are so contradictory there is no such thing as "the best available" in reason, the person in question must be the best available to run the NSW State Theatre Company, and a mere question of that superiority is Australian nationality. The case for someone who understands national character and local taste is overwhelming. No less a man than Colin Bellamy has previously argued at these pages (October 78) that "the highest talent known on Broadway lives". This is true for such a predominantly imported repertoire as the opera obviously has, but not for drama — unless, as is increasingly happening in our cities, theatre is to assume a character less international.

A state company is a kind of shrine. And Bellamy's propositions for what it should provide are spot on. To wit:

1. A classical programme of international quality.
2. An Australian play programme taking equal ranking.
3. A balance of some of the best work of modern outside Australia.

It is interesting to note that in the case of SA, State Theatre Company, of which he was the Chairman, he admits to a failing in regards the second of these.

The theme though should be a living movement not a dead one. Everyone was fearful of the deepening threat of bureaucracy, of it being at loggerheads with creativity. John Bell owned up quite and cheerily for the remark that businessmen "take great satisfaction in telling artists what they can't have". His gesture, with the experience and success of Pizzaro to back him up, is that it should be apparent that any new art up to a theatre can by theatre people.

It was put by Ken Harvey that the Artistic Director might even be given a free hand to choose his own board — a suggestion not so outrageous, as it sounds. Already the Government is aware of the need to give full artistic control over the hands of a single director at the head, making it clear from the start that there will not be a repeat of the Old Time organised directors, and indeed in Wran's words that "the character, style and essence of the company will depend on the quality of its director". So it should be: No more councils.

The decision on the role was not only one of artistic control, but also geographical. As Stephen King remarked, any companies working in the Opera House are "at best puppets

(Continued on page 32)

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## “QUOTES & QUERIES”



Graduate Turner of Juppens with the parcels of *Treasure Island* for the Sydney Festival.

Photo: Peter Holdsworth

### QUEENSLAND QUERY

GEOFF SPENDER

When will the Theatre students of Brisbane's Kelvin Grove College of Advanced Education do if their lecturer Richard Trueman leaves in February? They answered with slings and stones. The protest marches within the college grounds took in the street, remember it is Queensland, the political infighting and plenty of media coverage were all part of a campaign to remove a decision not to renew the contract of their lecturer. However the private group tactics seemed to be in vain as the college administration maintained its position in the decision as it did when about a pending action by the state ombudsman. The reasons for the nonrenewal of the contract are shrouded by mystery. All sides had contributing

explanations. However the results are clear Trueman will accept one of his many offers from elsewhere leaving a deep loss for the students who have completed half of their full time course. In desperation the students assigned from the college as a final sacrifice for a decisive change.

His Trueman admitted his methods were considered unorthodox by some only because the methods were "too professional" for normal standards. "For this college I have aimed too high" he said, "but if you do not aim for the top you will only reach the bottom." By bringing people such as Stanislavsky's Vsevolod Meyerhold and Grotowski's Jerzy Grotowski into the course Mr Trueman hoped to plant a spiritual dagger of student involvement that would remain with the students.

"By bringing these people to my students I have done the impossible," he said, "that is the main reason for not screwing my contract."

The students felt that Trueman's "impossible music" was not the only reason for their displeasure, although the college director (Dr P D Bennett) had told them that Trueman had not adhered to the course guidelines. They respected staff freedom was the basic issue. Whatever the reasons, the students are the winners only because they have remained dedicated to a course to become professional actors. Their creative process is being discovered. "Perhaps this year has just been a waste of time," one student said in the picket up her banner and repeated the demonstration.

It is rumored that Richard Trueman's terms were in fact taking part in a non degree two year course of which theatre studies were only a part they were not supposed to be training in professional actors. And that the work Trueman was doing with them bore little relation to the course outline he had earlier introduced in the College. The classes were apparently conducted behind closed doors and windows, and only one "performance" to a select audience of 50 people

was given in a year to an indication of what work students were doing. It is also said that they were not encouraged to mix with other students by Trueman in their Queensland pursuit of excellence as Trueman did not wish other staff, and that did not fit in with the College's general approach. Richard Trueman's tenure expired at the end of 1979, and Kelvin Grove C.A.E. as was within their rights decided not to renew simply on the grounds that what he was teaching the students did not conform with the course outline.

However none of this can be confirmed as Dr Bennett is unavailable for comment to the press.

### THEATRE-FILM LINK UP

JULIA OVERTON, Film and TV School

"The Australian Film and TV School through its Open Programme is organising a film training course for published directors for the stage. This will provide practical training in film technique and lead to the production of several short films. Fil Breasley, Executive Producer of the course, has spoken to many people in the theatre and the course has been widely advertised in the national press. Selection of the next participants takes place on Friday 15th December. The selection panel is drawn from those experienced in the world of theatre and film."

### POCKET SIZED HOLE

COLIN McCOLL, Artistic Director, Hole in the Wall, Perth.

"People keep telling me rather apologetically, 'it's a very small space, you know'. However, I am used to working in pocket sized theatres, so no doubt I'll feel quite at home. The actor audience support possible in an intimate theatre like the Hole is invaluable and the staging layout can keep you and bring all the most intense scenes.

I'm in full accord with the Hole's original policy that the theatre should be young, vigorous and more than a little radical, and I'd like to see it developed even further than it has been in a theatre experience alternative to that offered by the other Perth companies. Also, I hope programming won't become too rigid, I think the Hole can afford to be fairly flexible in its programming, something that is not always possible for theatres committed to subscription seasons.

In the past I have been involved in work, shopping and directing new plays. It is an area of the work I find particularly rewarding and would like to continue it in some way at the Hole in the Wall."



## Q & Q

### TRUCKING ON

**DAMIAN JAMESON, Director, Riverline Trucking Company.**

"I hope to continue the company's proven policy of presenting a variety of interesting work, such as new plays and a company demand work. We hope to tour more, both within the region and to capital cities — in the region with more productions and a T&E tour. I am keen to get up a youth performing group and so have a playwright in residence with the company. I am very excited to have been chosen for the job and will be doing my best to maintain the company's present high standard."

### DRAMA LEAGUE PROGRAMME

#### MONTE WILLAM

The Victorian Drama League opened up a fresh channel for the amateur theatre in Melbourne during October with a new programme on 3 CR. Known as *Amateur Applauds* the thirty minute magazine type programme broadcasts news of forthcoming productions and auditions, reviews of productions, interviews with actors and directors, share music, requests for props and so on, as well as VTR news. Producers and presenters in Shane G. Burleigh, who trained in London, and worked in British television before coming from a few years ago. Broadcasts now on Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. the programme will be moved to a new time slot in 1979. Possibly *Amateur Applauds* will be heard at 12.30 on Sundays.

There has been a good response from groups so far."

### WILL PINAFORE SEDUCE TOURISTS?

*Pinafore* and *Uran* have just gone to do *WMB Pinafore* for a New Year holiday season in the Customs Theatre opening 12 January. The second production entirely mounted by the Customs Theatre Trust into the first was *Pinafore* has two acts — in fact the small January dead spot and to provide some popular theatre for the estimated flow of 300,000 visitors to Customs at the time of the year. Ben Crossley is the director, and local conductor Don Whitford the musical director, the rest of the cast will be from Customs and the set comes from the *Great Opera* of South Australia.

Sony Vaughan, Director of the Theatre Centre, who was M.D. for *Pinafore* and *Uran* last year, says the Trust is keeping its fingers and legal around in the production is turning out to be highly expensive. And the big question is will the tourists come? Or will they slump down exhausted in front of their movie TV after their all day delights in the War Memorial, the Man and the National Library?

### BODIES

**BRUCE MYLES, Director of "Bodies" for the MFC.**

"James Saunders is a writer of finest integrity

Never content merely to supply Mail End letter to a dispassionately present his own comic experiments with form and technique a wide range of subjects. He has his own acute standards and will not compromise or cheapen a play in either theme or characterisation for the sake of selling it."

### WORLD PLAY SEASON

#### JUDY CLIFFORD, *Guest NOW.*

We are selling the 1979 season of plays in the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House as the World Play Season as we have plays from Australia, France, England, Germany, America and Italy. The First Theatre Company came off with the Australian play, Patrick White's *A Cluttered Soul* in which Joe Shearman will direct Robert Neme. They continue with the French play *Les Femmes* playing the Lady of the Cambray in an adaptation of the play by Louis Nouriss. *Les Femmes* is directed.

Q. They're taking on *GB Show* for the English play *The Devil's Disciple* directed by Steven Warburton and John Clark and Aubrey Miller are directing *Les Femmes* in *Cambray* for the German offering.

An American director called Robert Lewis is coming from the UK to direct a production of *O'Neill's A Long Day's Journey*, then *Les Femmes* and the final production will be *Natural* with John Bell directing another Golden, the *Two Women*.

The season starts with *A Cluttered Soul* on 11th January and ends on 1st December."

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### A FESTIVE THEATRE

Last November last year after the reading up of the OM Time, the driving forces behind the concept of a NSW State Theatre company were deciding who would be involved and what they would call the new company. At the time of writing no water had been stirred but a decision had just about been made. An interim company, The NSW Drama Company, is to be formed and the first production will be directed by Ian Shawman. One of the many names they were throwing around was The Festival of Sydney Theatre Company. In my opinion the idea is the best, especially if the Festival organisation, the Sydney Community Arts, to lead the company. Geoffrey Hall, executive director of the committee has one of the most classically commercial heads on his shoulders. I have seen. Let's hope that a company headed and funded by the Sydney Committee will prosper — my guess is that it will.

### FROM EAST TO WEST

The Festival of Sydney winds up on January 20th and is followed on February 1st with the Perth Festival which is staying open to celebrate as scheduled. Perth is a beautiful city well worth visiting, especially with the line up of attractions for February and August already looking holidays. Unfortunately Perth is the top of the Black Duck Legion, my neck sometimes hurt but don't let that stop you, I am assured that there will be more quantities of other reinforcements for the more critical parts. If somebody will send me a ticket I'll see you there.

### NEW APPOINTMENT

Mr Kevin Palmer a committee member of the Australian Association of Theatre Technicians and founder member of the AATT in Adelaide returns to the land of the Swan Down for this month to take up an appointment with the State Theatre Company of South Australia. Mr Palmer will hold the role of Associate Director and will be assisting Mr Colin George the Artistic Director with their first full length production of *Hawley*.

### FORGED TICKETS

Last year's David Bowie concerts were plagued with sharks selling forged tickets. The answer to this problem is simple — don't buy tickets from spectators other than the accredited agencies. Competition for authentic product values that to the naked eye seem quite normal but under a black hole light the Competition logo gives away the authenticity. Let's hope things don't get to a stage where all tickets will be checked at the gate.

### A NEW CLASS OF ACTING

Tom Rathbone and Gary Krane, both actors, are now venturing into the world of teaching. They started acting classes last year with five pupils consisting mainly of people wanting to gain a little self confidence. Gary Krane is experienced in teaching as his sister runs the Lynda Krane Junior Talent School in Sydney and Gary has been helping her with the running of the school. He has also just finished a solo pilot for a television show he hopes to sell to one of the networks. It is *Time Machine* but the difference is that all the cast are under 11 years of age.



John Watson

### A BLOODY BLOT

That's just what it was during the last week of December at Her Majesty's in Sydney last year — a bloody riot. Hundreds of screaming, gagging teenage girls in the theatre during the show if it were they didn't see anything on the stage except John Watson and then writhing around outside the stage door after the show hoping to get Mr Watson's autograph. However, December opens the month in Adelaide and a should do very well during to five week run before going to Melbourne. And it's month punning up with Drac's fans, because the show is great.

### TELEVISION DROUGHT

Well the 1979 television ratings were again next month and with the ratings come down television goes and movies that are worth watching. Unfortunately every year we are subjected to poor quality productions from November to February that can only be described with one word — but if I put it I'll be sacked! As for Christmas viewing, if I have to sit through *The Lamb Dressmaker* film again this year I'll throw a brick through the screen.



## Ray Stanley's

# WHISPERS & RUMOURS & FACTS

There's nothing like wandering around a film set for picking up pieces of news, as I discovered recently when visiting Queensland, and the home of *Cubans*, where *My Brilliant Career* was being shot. Firstly Wendy Hughes, who reminded me that she hadn't been on stage since her days with the MTC. And, yes, she most certainly would like to go back to it, preferably in the theatre. We talked about what Shakespearean role might suit her, an obvious one like *Isabella* has been doing around the country in recent years. Wendy knows *Lady Macbeth*, but there is still plenty of time for that (but what about *Isabella* — except for the recent Sydney production. It isn't much of being played in Australia, not for the last 25 years at least, yet it is frequently seen in England. So what about a MTC SATC at QTC? And what about her partner, Chris Haywood, as *Don Juan*?

Then I met the new screen testee, Jane Nellie, a New Zealander, who was in the NZ picture *Sleeping Dogs*, the role of Harry in *Career* is his first Australian work but, judging from the talk around the set, we're going to hear a lot about Jane Nellie in the future on screen, TV and stage. So remember the name.

There's also young Judy Davis, playing the part of Sybilie — she also was impressing everyone on the set. She told me she'd joined the South Australian Theatre Company straight from NIDA, played in *Norman's Palace* in Sydney, and then landed the lead in *Career*. And a fellow NIDA student, who was married along with her by the SATC was Mel Gibson, who has the role role in Michael Pate's film *Five Senses* as if Colin George might have a knock of picking them because Robert Grubb, who plays Frank in *Career*, had come straight from NIDA, and they were going to join the SATC.

I missed Patricia Kennedy on the set. She plays Aunt Cassie, and already had played most of her scenes in *Cubans* outside Sydney. But I did meet Alison Bretton, who's *Gracinda Bonner* in the picture. She told me it was a direct result of her performance as *Melrose* quickly in the recent *Newman News* TV that she was cast in the role. Somewhat gloriously she pointed out that was only her second film role, and the other was in *Kevin G. Hall's* *Thelma Houston* 40 years ago!

The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust, which obviously is going to make a huge profit out of its share of *Amor*, seems to be moving more and

more into the environmental field. It will be mounting its production of *PS Your Car & Golf* and 1979 and hopes to sell it to other municipalities around for an approximate 20 week tour. A top Australian director is likely to direct and an American guest star cast in one of the two main roles.

The APTC also has David Mamet's *A Life in the Theatre*, which will be staged in Adelaide's lower tier in 1979, with a major imported star and New York director Gerald Casanova likely to instigate the play here. The other leading actor will probably be a top Australian TV star. Conceptually the SATC will be staging another Western play in the coming season. *American Buffalo* directed by Nick Knight. David Jones Simon Burke has played at Newsum before and about appearing in *The Devil's Playhouse*. He told me he intends making a career out of acting and when it conventional stage work to gain more experience.

Understand from Wilson Morley that after the New York run of *The Education of Benjamin Franklin* he'll be producing a revised version of the play around Australia — with Gordon Cloner of course. Wilson Morley has quite a few projects lined up including a one man show by Alan McCann, co-produced with Robert Stimpert, and a touring his father Robert will be making another tour. How whimsical that Laraine Day is coming out of *The Salivants* in March, that she is going overseas for a year, and when she gets back will probably be returning as stage work.

Good that Australian actors, in being reassigned again overseas with Pamela Gibson taking over her old part of *Shelia* in *Of Course Love* in the London production. It certainly does a Henry and sets up Michael Aspin and his wife Veronica Long in a long contract run, both are likely to desert the Australian scene for London. From what he told me, I gave the impression Aspin would rather stay in Australia. That's excellent that the Australian Film and Television School is approaching cinema and established stage producers/directors and offering them training

at an advanced level in the skills and techniques of feature film-direction.

Telling Australian playwrights Elizabeth King, *Literary Manager* to the Actors Theatre of Australia (116-120 West Main Street, Louisville, Kentucky, 40202) is interested in receiving good Australian plays. Says her theatre is the American parallel to the Melbourne Theatre Company. *Burns* world premieres staged there include *B. B. Cabaret*, *The Gilt Game* and *Martin Hartman's* *Century*. Our Irish friends seen on Broadway.

It's not often an actor becomes the first to look into young for a role, but such is the case of Elizabeth Ballance who plays *Lobby Clark* and Greg Rowe's mother in the film of *Blue Fin*. "I am the right age to play their mother," admits Elphinstone, who seems really annoyed the only look like an older actor. And speaking of young Greg Rowe, he told me he would very much like to go about stage experience. So wait to see Colin George — why not let him out-swinging at the SATC this year? Sandy Rahn West's wonderful coffee table book *Phases in Australia* is the difference we're not had on the subject. Highly recommended.

One is constantly amazed at some of the outrageous claims made by management. Latest is *The Last Laugh's* programme for its excellent *L. O. Shaw's* *Three Black and Three White* *Defiant* *Julius* *Shaw's* which, announcing its next season refers to *Ross* *Shaw's* as "Australia's finest scoring maestro". What do all the other fine musicians around here in say in that? I wonder? And anyway, *Shaw's* is a New Zealander! The Adelaide Festival Centre Trust is negotiating with a London music publishing firm to create an Australian production of a very successful one woman cabaret show from Vienna, entitled *Tangle*. *Lois Blue* for Robert Arthur.

And finally, am very impressed with the Universal Workshop complex in Finney on the edge of the city of Melbourne. The whole conception is really wonderful structure, shows, venues for restaurants, cinema — and a 150-acre lake theatre. And that is just of authority in the set up, it can be done.

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## LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Apologies for your article in the November issue of Theatre Australia in the 269 Playhouse. I wish to clarify a few points which might give rise to misinterpretation.

Firstly, I am not the Manager of the 269 Playhouse formerly the Independent Theatre. I have been official treasurer while Mr John Howitt has been away overseas.

Mr Howitt, as we know, has been the sole guiding light of the very successful Killers 648 Coffee Theatre which has for eleven years before closing down at the beginning of 1993.

He leased the Independent Theatre, re-naming it the 269 Playhouse, and also established the 480 Drama School.

His main policy for the 269 Playhouse was to use it as an experience gaining ground for your professionals who have been properly trained in no system — such as provincial (in England) or Summer Stock in America — exists in Australia. Mr Howitt feels that the policy will give young professionals a chance to produce their craft — before facing the real world in large established professional theatres.

That is what I meant by my statement concerning the establishment of a new policy as, at this stage, Mr Howitt cannot compete financially or technically with the large established theatre companies.

Olivia Booth  
Wellingtonville, NSW

Dear Sir,

I was very interested to read the review by Mr Tony Baker of my play, *A Moment Of Jewish Mayhem* and would like to make a few comments.

Your typographer have rendered some sentences in the review unintelligible, but they give some through slight and, by and large, it is not too unlike mine. I am grateful to learn that Mr Baker took the trouble to actually reread the play instead of merely skimming it as did Peter Ward in *The Australian*.

May I start by clearing a misconception? It is not an anti war play. I am neither far too stupid nor, it simply happens that's all. Life itself is a struggle, and war is a fair metaphor for that. I agree with Thomas Hardy in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* that happiness is only an accidental episode in a general drama of pain. If my play has any message to make, it is that bloom and blare seek when joy, when genuine communication, unclouded by lies, compromise and propaganda, they can in the midst of the reality of universal, or as it was called, World War. To find that they must seek within themselves, break down barriers and find love where it lies, as the song says. The play has nothing to say about the morality of war, as Mr Baker claims, because I do not believe in any such construct. We survive, that's all and here, wherever we find it, is merely a tool for survival.

In the Adelaide production some passages, describing some of the greater horrors of the real Chalkopolis campaign, were cut. In my opinion that weakened the statement of the play by diluting the power of war.

It is true that the play is emotional. I am emotional. I value language. I distrust witless. I reject the almost universal prejudice, to which Mr Baker evidently subscribes, which equates "innocent" with "innocent". Though perhaps, I should not be surprised, knowing my own country fairly well, that an Australian reviewer "lapses" when then embrace.

Men do violence, Mr Baker, mark my words, as war as in life. Have you not noticed? And when everybody that is throwing lumps of lead at each other, will they stop?

Incidentally, a point of fact. Burs is not commonly flogged, nor flogged at all, when taken offstage by Corporal Myers.

Finally, may I say how pleased and relieved I am that Mr Baker assumed, as, very correctly, that the nearest comparison, if I may use that word, of homosexuality and warlike did not shock him, definitely not. I would not like to have been responsible for alienating Mr Baker to something new.

Yours faithfully,  
Glen Garrison,  
London UK



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## SPOTLIGHT

### Patricia Kennedy's brilliant career

#### looked at by Ray Stanley

1978 could be said to have been across Patricia Kennedy's year. During it — apart from many other engagements — she played Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie* and *Deaf Travellers* at Honey, IV for the South Australian Theatre Company. *Julius and Ethel*, *Fraser for the Old Time* was mentioned but supporting actress in the AFI New awards for her role of Miss Chapman in the picture *The Greeting of Wisdom* played Aunt Cassie in the recently completed film of Miles Franklin's *My Brilliant Career*, and finished the year portraying Martha in the Melbourne Theatre Company's *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In my small way it is no doubt whatever that Patricia Kennedy is the finest actress we have in Australia. She is also very much in the mould of Peggy Ashcroft and the late Eileen Evans.

Witness of her performances I rate amongst the finest I have seen anywhere in the world — *Miss Alcock in Ghosts* for instance, *The Cenci* in AFI's *Walt From Earth Hell and Angels* in *A Delicate Balance*. In fact she probably is the only actress in the world to have played that role in the *Albee* play for four different companies: the MTC, SATC, Glasgow Company and *Brangel Old Vic*.

Patricia is an actress who has fought against type-casting, like answer to people who say they could not see her in a particular part as quite simply "I'm an actress". Like the same old stock comedy in the old-fashioned ladylike roles.

When in charge of the SATC in its early days, John Under, more discerning than some of her directors, followed up her *Agnes* in the *Albee* play with a characterisation in *Shogun's The Golden Legend of Charming Women*. The SATC's general director, Colin George, also did a work *Deaf Travellers*. Then a few years back, at the MTC's anthology *Some of My Best Friends Are Women* she was able to display all sides of her versatility: surprising quite a few people I myself which seeing her in the sophisticated manner of a high class beauty in the *Albee* version of *Giles Cooper's Everything in the Garden*.

People talk to me about her *Miss MacGuffin* in *The Chalk Garden* when *Spirit Throbbles* is represented with Patricia's performance; instead she had equal billing to Sir Lewis Casson and herself. *Queen Sybil* at the time told her she should play Peggy Ashcroft type roles. Patricia received an AFI award for her performance in that play which was seen all around Australia and New Zealand in the last 1978.

Patricia, whose career spans more than forty years, is perhaps best known for her outstanding work on radio: a medium in which she has played many varied parts including a considerable number in the classics. On stage her credits include *Poems*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Caedra*, *Lady Macbeth* in Shaw's *Major Barbara*, *Jack*, *Lady Macbeth* and *Miss Underhill*, *Mary Tyrone* in *O'Neill's Long Day's Journey Into Night*, the wren in *John Arden's Miter* in *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* and *Miss Harlowe*.

A highly intelligent, energetic, honest and dedicated artist who always strives for perfection, Patricia has been known to let her suspicion for some over-zealous directors who have failed to measure up to the high standards she sets herself. She is in fact very critical of her own work and where possible, will go to great lengths at the outset of research before undertaking a role.

Patricia Kennedy is probably one of the most respected artists upon the Australian stage, and constantly sought to young players. Frequently I have seen her nobly assist an inexperienced performer — often singing a particular scene for her way — only to find another artist, give the other player the highest words of praise and pass Patricia over in silence, almost completely losing in process how she has guided that performer.

Few actresses I have seen in this country have been able to get so completely into the skins of their characters as Patricia does. Her major claim — as one would expect from the First Lady of Radio — is her voice. Anyone who heard her reading the morning transmissions on radio of *The Greeting of Wisdom* must have marvelled as I did at the deft and gentle tones she achieved as well as the tenderness and vibrant strength. It seemed like a seamless blend of different unperceived emotions. She is also expert in dialect.

Like Dame Eileen Evans, wherever the occasion presents itself Patricia will not take coaching to keep up her vocal standard.

Had this actress been resident in England for the last quarter of a century, she would probably have made recordings of poetry and been involved in other similar LPs, plus much television and film work. Like *Peter Evans*, the film world seems to have discarded her late in life, now that a few too large she will be given the opportunity of leaving much of her art to poetry.



Patricia Kennedy as Aunt Cassie in *My Brilliant Career*

There is one thing we will have to do: Patricia Kennedy perform on stage: a one woman show of her own. It could well be the crowning glory.

## Actors at Sea

### Barry Eaton

One of the great advantages theater enjoys over its rivals in the entertainment field is its flexibility. Companies can go out after their audiences and not just at one time, but people to suit to them. Over the years in Antares we have seen plays produced in theatres, school halls, open fields, tents and anywhere else people can be persuaded to gather. In the last couple of years the unexpected success of the *53* Premier have provided the theater with a brand new audience. Here they come aboard nearly unexpecting, two or three weeks of eating, drinking, a few deck sports, drinking, a bit of night life, the inevitable lousy dress ball and of course a lot more serious drinking. Then they

find a harbor. A whole lot of these funny theatroists are on board and they're doing some plays in the picture theatre. Funny, they don't do that on board any of the other cruises.

Sammy Latta came up with the idea of a floating theatre a couple of years ago and approached the Mayor's Theater Organization for ideas. Those plays were selected for their entertainment value, a cast selected for a three month run at sea, and the *Sammy Latta* theatre was born. Two years and several cast later, it will be a lasting success.

The producer, Sam Folkard, says, "I'm just amazed, because none of the customers are pretty sailors. Not all of them. The cruises may,

sometimes you get an older bunch. For instance, the Japanese cruise they've just gone on now, we call that the previous cruise. Well after all, they can afford the time and the money. The kids have got the money, but they haven't got the time. So you get all things and men on board. But even on some of the older cruises it's just amazing how they cater to it."

The cast perform three different plays on a cruise — *Memorabilia* is that one? *Memorabilia* for *Five* and *The Mind* with a *Derry* after. Usually each play is given two performances, but there is often an extra performance due to popular demand. The old cargo hold was converted into a theatre with a deep end and main and a capacity of about 300. It is used as a cinema at other times. The audience is charged a ticket sum of 30c with the proceeds going to the Actors' Benevolent Fund.

What kind of reaction do they get on board?

"On the place is planned," says Sam Folkard, "We very rarely have an empty seat. People don't seem to worry too much about the films being shown, but we nearly always play to capacity."

The director James Fiddlers never has any trouble getting a good cast together. "They're all excited by the challenge of getting away and playing three entirely different roles in rather odd circumstances. Particularly with an audience that's not used to seeing theatre. Probably over 80% of the passengers have never been outside her theatre."

With only something like 24 repeat business, there has been no need to change the repertoire in the last two years. Next year, though changes are being planned. Sam Folkard is looking at replacing *Memorabilia* for *Five* with *There's a Girl in my Dress*. The other two plays could also be dropped next September and replacements are being considered at the moment.

Life on board for the cast is pretty relaxed with only an average of an hour's rehearsal per day. Graham Mulvey has done several cruises and says the only danger is the feeling of monotony that can overtake the cast. The long separation from the rest of the world can often make things difficult on the return to harsh realities of life ashore. Life on board ship can also have its moments, especially at night when. During one performance it got so rough that the screen depicting the refrigerator nearly fell in. Unfortunately it was in a corner scene as well.

As director, Sam Fiddlers seems to have the same tricks well down pat. An old new cast put out at the beginning of their three month season. Sam goes along to keep things ship shape. With the prospect of four cruises a year in the line of duty, no wonder Mr. Fiddlers looks pleased with life. The focus for Sam's floating theatre is very bright. With the resounding success of the theatre on board the *Fairstar*, it seems only a matter of time before the other ships of the line are similarly equipped.

The Fairstar



## Liv Ullman travelling alone

by Miriam Fleischman

Repetitive, unspontaneous, as actress Liv Ullmann served those minutes late for her Tuesday press conference. She does look the part: a golden-haired goddess glowing from health and something regular hours and good food. Her manner is something but regal, like first words being "I'm sorry I'm late, it was the train," and as she answered questions it was soon clear that this princess knows that princess does it, climb in the back of taxis these days, as she has learned to almost terrorise with her own real and varied talents.

In Sydney for a 17-day run at the Theatre Royal she was appearing with Michael Fucc in a Chekhov piece. The Beer and wine in Joan Cameron's *The Human Voice*. These final offerings were directed by New York director Josephine Ann Quattrone who is, in Ullmann's words, "A marvelous director to work with. A heart on legs. I'm sure we will work together often in the future."

Ullmann's distinguished career began with *The Diary of Anne Frank* on stage in Norway, where she went on to play the great female roles, Juliet Ophelia and Ibsen. She also appeared in Norwegian films, but it was her work with Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman — *Personae*, *Face to Face*, *Screens from a Marriage*, *Shame*, *Cries and Whispers* — which brought her awards and international acclaim. Bergman is also the father of her only child, twelve-year-old daughter, Linn.

Ullmann's roots are in theatre, but territory is huge. She does not consider herself a film star. "The golden minutes spring from contact with an audience, when many people laugh or cry together, experience the same thing together. Making a film is quite different, you can think and the camera catches it for you. One of the reasons Norwegian films are not distributed internationally, aside from the language, is that the directors there are limited and it is the director who must pull it all together." She feels her collaboration with Bergman worked so well because together they had a reciprocal understanding, by which she knew what to do without his having to direct her.

Asked if that are two Liv Ullmanns, she said she does not look at herself as a star. "I understand the celebrity thing. After all I am sitting here at a press conference, which is easier for me since I am shy and it is hard for me to talk privately. Lyn and I have our home in Norway. Our dog and cat are there. The neighbours take care of them when we travel. She comes with me. This is the first time I am travelling alone."

About being a woman, Liv replied, "It is still difficult for women to know who they are, what they want to be and do. Women got in their

own way. My generation will have great feelings. That's one of the reasons I want my book *Changing/In-Change* myself to my daughter as a person not just as a mother. In a sense we are stuck with our upbringing, to be good girls. In these matters Norway is ten years behind even Australia. Perhaps my book has helped other women in similar circumstances. The greatest personal challenge was when I found myself turned into another parent, doing everything I never thought I would do. I divorced and I had five-year-old child. Now it is not so unusual. Maybe I made it easier for other women. The theme was important, it's what you put on it."

Did she enjoy working with Ingmar Bergman in *Personae*? "It was fantastic. He is 62 now and a woman of great courage. Very proud. No looking back. Not time to work every day even when not well. She never complained. I

think she gives the best performance I have ever seen."

After Sydney, Mrs Ullmann crossed up New York to begin work on a musical being made from *P. P. Rosenbergs Affair*. "Richard Rogers is doing the music. I had planned to speak the words, like Mrs. Harriman and Katherine Hepburn. He asked me to sing so he could hear my voice. He is 80 now and not well. When I finished singing Happy Birthday he was almost 100." She smiles, "It will be all right. I play Mame, a wonderful woman, motherhood with five children, a husband who lives but."

We are all smiling.

"I think I've been very fortunate with my cancer. I wanted to share with others, like a family, and I've had the chance to do that. Am I afraid of failure? I'm ashamed of failure of people at home and I. But I accept it because you can't succeed all the time. Yes, I plan to write another book. I have to act, to write, to read, to watch movies. Your last movies on TV are good."

Repetitive, we are enthralled. Even when you let your hair down, you're a real princess.

Liv Ullman





# Save the Regent

## Richard Fotheringham

Strap hanging round on a rush hour bus, crawling up Roma Street, you depend on the railway billboards to occupy the idle mind. BUHNO TO LONDOON said one. (Elephantia opposed Queensland Agent General.) And then crawling across two huge billboards: **SAVE THE REGENT!** Not graffiti, but tonight, smoking mood lighting in royal red and white (Save Charles? For John Kerr?) The bus rumbles to a halt and we find two minutes to contemplate the fact that facing us was not the stuff of which free associations are made, but saved the latest belated publicity stunt, as it occurred, well disguised thanksgiving of a protest at the threatened destruction of Brisbane's greatest old palace of the arts. A protest that will probably win the war, having already won several battles. But a campaign also that deserves to be preserved in history as a definitive textbook for community action and political commitment.

Brisbane's Regent Theatre opened in 1939, a vast 3,600 seat Spanish neopalladian gothic and neo-rococo extravaganza, boasting its own 30 piece orchestra stage band, toilet and nighty Wileas organ which rose like Escudor from the orchestra pit, shrouding the first age of Australia live entertainment had begun. Wilbur Kemwell in the town, and George Wallace behind curtain raising for his own. Audiences from then till now have goggled at the outrageous ornamentation. Regent's glacial conservatism which stood as way in a million yards from foyer to proscenium (the mighty marble staircase the vast elliptical dome and chandeliers. Actors as roosts as Wileas. He will have inspired its successor, the National Trust, classified it as worthy of preservation in all ways, and the National Heritage Commission put it on the National Register. And up until five years ago it appeared certain that Regent Theatres were going to tip it down to put in a few cinema complexes. The Regent had been used as a film theatre since the Second World War and it wasn't paying.

The Provincial Trust had tried for two years to take the demolition, wishing to preserve the building as an architectural monument, but had been unable to put money where its heart was. Then suddenly three young Brisbane men — two architects and a filmmaker — decided that time to put all their spare time and energy behind a desperate last minute effort to Save the Regent. It was to be a carefully disguised protest — there is nothing tasteful about the campaign! advised one press release and you were as likely to find a story on their efforts in the *Young Liberals* and the *Queensland Country Life* as in more predictably conservative minded journals. But it was also a brilliantly orchestrated public relations campaign, drawing messages of

support from Sir Robert Holtermann House Cinema and 30 000 Queenslanders who spread out posters to save the theatre.

There were of course placard protests outside the theatre, but even these had a difference, not the issue of which was a just band. When Queensland police can pull over to look at the traffic to get out, come over, and tell you position then you know where placard movement lies. Even placardmen found their first day once again a time, and if you press up in Brisbane between the theatre and the cinema chapel was probably in the highway stalls at the ovalton picture palace in town.

It would have been easy to dismiss the Save the Regent Campaign as being no more than that a nonconformist basic piece of courage. For I realised a week's while on that same crowded bus for my afternoon Telegraph informed me that in the church hour the Campaign had persuaded the Building Workers Union to place a giant banner the destruction of the theatre.

Kate Chadwick, Jack Kershaw, and Gloria Paterson are no fools, and behind the public demonstration and publicity means a careful analysis of where power lay had been made and acted upon. "The pressure proved we had public support," commented Kate Chadwick, "but there was an art in presenting it to parliament. We had to find out what we were fighting and then decide how to fight."

The land and building ownership of the Regent is complicated, simply explained it is owned and administered by both Regent Theatres and the trustees of the estate of the late Dr James O'Neil Meyer. The beneficiary of the Meyer estate is the University of Queensland and the terms of the will require the trustees to consult the University Senate to ensure the most profitable return to the University. There was part of the theatre which Regent could demolish without consulting anyone — the Campaign decided its scarce lobbying efforts at both the University and the Union representatives, and in the week before demolition was due to start it drew a favourable response from both.

Central to the Campaign's efforts were two carefully produced booklets which were delivered to each Senate member before Senate meetings. They prompted the Senate to set up its own sub-committee inquiry into the Regent's

viability of Regent's own business proposal. The result was astounding. Not only did the University not get any money whatsoever till 1990, but it also stood to lose \$1 million dollars or more from other Regent estate properties which was to be diverted into funding construction of the new cinema. As the sub-committee report duly noted, it was an unsatisfactory proposition.

Simultaneously the Campaign set out to show that the Regent was still viable in its present form. Not as an architectural monument like the old National Trust model is, a cinema that costed for a comparatively modest \$14 million (compared to its original function — live theatre). The success of the Sydney Regent and of similar theatres in Canada and the USA were documented, Michael Budge and Ross Broadbent were supporting the Campaign by announcing their members in both shows there if it was made available, and a list of donors. Regent was moving out on *Melinda Ann*, *Chorus Line*, *Starry MacLaren* (was drawn up. Brisbane will never have another live theatre venue seating 3,600, for even the new Cultural Centre when opened will seat only 2,000 in its largest auditorium. LA has already commenced on work which by comparison is enormous). The Campaign was able to inspire several organisations who have now submitted film proposals to lease the Regent as a live theatre venue, the Senate and the trustees are mulling these. If not it scuppered the Campaign will have won.

The final factor which has made the Save the Regent Campaign such a force to be reckoned with is that it is a protest by professionals, architects, lawyers, musicians, actors, playwrights — experts of every relevant kind. Experts who know the facts and who can refute the lies of those who had Regent to lose their pockets at the expense of the community and live and dirty tricks there have been by the dozens (carefully documented by each succeeding booklet and press release). The project took light as I write last November for Saving the Regent. We are, in fact, the Campaign needs to be needed and rewarded in detail for the benefit of historians who might succumb to the forces that destroyed themselves, beginning to stop the work of history.

The Regent Theatre



# **David Williamson**

My Life and Times in the Big Apple





This is an account of how I postaged amongst the most savage critics in the world, armed only with an Australian play, and survived. I left Melbourne with my wife and family in January and returned in September. This nine months absence is the longest time I have spent away from the land of my birth, and should, according to commonly accepted myths, have given me new perspectives on life, on drama, and on Australia. I came back with the conviction that Denmark is colder than Australia, that Greece is tastier, and that nothing much had changed here while I'd been away. I opened my *Theatre Australia* to find that the already informed were still clamouring for the death of naturalism, that four hundred year old renaissance theatrical shifwadee that dares depict humanity as it almost is and refuses to go away, and that the Old Tate had died but was to the ages under a different name. My home continent was not entirely wasted. My experiences amongst the most severely vicious critics in the world led me to formulate a law about their critical activities which I am sure will live after me, long after my world little state of theatrical realism have been forgotten. I'll get to it later.

Manhattan is a giant rat hole filled with apologetic, bourgeois, radicalist, creative writing, painting, sculpting, composing, crafting, and generally having a good old work (homosexuality isn't yet mandatory, but a bisexual married couple we met admitted that they were being attracted by the man committed to their gay friends for having it such way. When it became reasonably clear that we were straight they ducked into the back room and brought out a baby, which apparently was there. Babes are almost extinct on Manhattan and they hold it proudly like integral an players back from the Amazon with an exotic beam).

In the midst of such treachery, I thought, how could a simple play about backstage politics in an Australian Rules football club survive?

From the very start the odds were all bad. The play had to be examined for its Washington sexism because there was another play called *The Club* already in existence. I submitted a long list of alternative names which were all rejected by some clerk, or compared to the Kennedy Centre and eventually, by some unfilled project skin to commit the name. Players emerged. I couldn't come up with a better one, so I was stuck with it as 'posting deadlines' had to be met.

The second cause for misgiving was the sexism, reproached by all the Washingtonians. I met, that "what Washington likes, New York loathes". It's apparently a matter of principle, and as the play had performed tolerably well in Washington we were behind the eight ball already. Of course if the play hadn't performed tolerably well in Washington it would never have gone into New York, so you lose either way.

"We're going in", said Roger Stevens the producer. "It's a bet to me that because you're unknown, we haven't got a star and we're going right into the middle of a newspaper strike, but what the hell?

It's a cheap show, we've got the east assembled and Asia is making a fortune." (The Kennedy Centre was a large meeting in Asia.) "Why is it?" I asked nervously, "that things that work here are not liked in New York?" "Because there are a lot of smart-arse critics in New York who like to think they're the toughest in the world — and they are".

The third portent occurred while I was at a party and rather beautiful old gentleman outside of New York, which I'd fled to with the family during the rehearsal week to escape the awfulness of Manhattan. On the day we arrived we looked at the notice board and found that the evening's activity was a lecture by a well known Broadway drama critic Alvin Klien. My tongue stung and my wrists pained. My first encounter with the species. It turned out to be disappointing. Mr Klien was all sweetness and light and charmingly modest to boot.

"Critics have no real authority," he said, "because after all they only offer an opinion and who's to say that their opinions are any better than anyone else's".

That was just his opinion. For the rest of the evening Mr Klien was such a model of tact and sensibility that you would have sworn that the slightest whiff of human periodic al five thousand years would have caused him deepest a gony and a sleepless night. The man's self-effacement was awe-inspiring.

However next day, having gone through his papers and earned his free weekend, he reverted to type, dispatching his family imperiously in the direction of Lake Minnowaska while he held court to ten or so adorning stage struck women, showering them with definitive opinions and tolerating no dissent.

"How did you get your job?" said one of the minnows. "I kept reading the obituary column," he answered. I realised what I was in for.

After the play had opened and the hundred and five first night critics from TV, Radio, the weeklies and the Press had been and gone and done their worst, Clive Barnes, their doyen, was kind enough to tell me what I'd always known was true.

"Critics, including myself," he said, "are damnable people. You have to be an egomaniac to believe that the world and his dog want to read your opinions, but it goes out a sense of power, prestige, visibility and status and I like all of those, and New York, with its plethora of obsessive creators and their endless citations is the perfect feeding ground for the rat."

Still, who could pretend that it wasn't a little flattering for a lad from far Australia to sit there washing those hundred and five scribbles on their little pads.

"We try and split them up," said the depper PR man. "If you sit them together in a block they have a deadening effect of the house."

He pointed across at one of them. "There's John Simon", he whispered to me. John Simon is New York's number one hater man. A New York article was recently reported to have taken out an insurance policy of a million dollars against the possibility of meeting Simon on

the street, because he felt that if he did there was no way he could prevent himself from killing him. The week I arrived Simon named three actors who he hoped he would never see again on a New York stage. He hoped that he would never see see them playing Father Christmas in a department store.

I just received the list of the hundred and thirty odd writs back in the post the other day. What did all this massive effort in time, money and newspaper add up to?

#### ON THE PLAY'S UNIVERSALITY

"Plays never transcend the football field with its half dozen cardboard characters."

H A Epstein *The Columbia Flyer* (Mr Epstein headed his crit 'Foot Play from down under')

"... the plays strength — the Universality of its well kept juggle"

Circ Barnes *The Mirror* (A Strike Paper) "Plays, has humour, character insight and admirable team playing by the actors. Unfortunately all of this remains too much in the confines of the clubhouse."

Edwin Wilson *The Wall Street Journal* "The power struggle of his characters is emblematic of all people, in every time, place and language."

Deborah Carr *Ashington News* "The drama is never so compelling as to overcome the overall unreality of rugby to an American audience."

Jeffrey Lyons WPIX TV "While the action takes place in Australia it could easily have happened anywhere in the world."

Virginia Woodruff Ch 10 TV

#### ON THE PLAY'S CONSTRUCTION

"Continued"

Mel Gussow Ch 13 TV "This is a subtle play whose tangled and conflicting emotions are deftly and sympathetically resolved."

John Quinn WOR TV "Nothing more than a crummy obvious melodrama."

Debra Cunningham WGBS TV "A snatching tale true and humorous drama from Australia. Tightly written and splendidly played."

Richard L Cox *The Washington Post* "Rather too pat and contrived"

John Braverton *The Christian Science Monitor*

"His comic drama has truth, intelligence and skilful plotting."

Susan Klein WNEW TV

#### ON THE PLAY'S DEPTH

"If you do not ask for more than light entertainment from the theater, you could do worse than this"

John Simon *New York*

"These grown men quarrelling so fiercely and so unprovokedly amongst the mothers are like wrangle children. ... Mr Williamson shares with Mr Henrik (Ionesco) a dark view of 'humanity'."

Brandon Gill *The New Yorker* (Whose review was headed 'Isaac in the Antipodes')

"It is written in a popular vein"

Harold Clurman *The Nation*.

"There is never any question that Williamson is after serious stuff. Plays is a prototype liberal drama."

Tony Curtis Fox Village Voice

"Slight" Mel Gussow Ch 13 TV

"Plays is no more a comedy than *Deep Throat* is a film about nursing. Above all it's about the compromise of personal and institutional integrity for personal greed and gain."

Richard Carter *The Private Gossip Post* "A rather innocuous work."

Jeffrey Lyons WPIX TV

"And what indeed is that over glorious essence in Williamson's ingenious mind? It is in the very heart and soul of human life as it exasperatedly struggles with that age old battle of the flesh (Human lust and power) and the spirit (Human virtue and honour)"

Norman Charles *New York Graphic* (Does it, perhaps though I am, not a little embarrassed at that one?)

#### ON THE PLAY'S HUMOUR

"The humour is forced, laden, the wit clumsy."

August Le Sourd *Reporter*

"wipes with dialogue that often specifies like fireworks."

Daniel Delaney *The Black American*

"Innocent battles"

Harold Toppin

Cue "There is genuine humour here. It is a vulgar humour, though not without sophisticated undertones."

John Simon *New York*

"The dialogue is colorful, funny and at times dramatic"

Paul Vanecko

All these critical contradictions and many more more led me incessantly to the line of criticism I mentioned earlier.

"As the number of critics approaches infinity, the probability of reaching any meaningful consensus, provided that the work itself shows a certain level of competence, complexity and originality, approaches zero."

Williamson 1978

or in its alternative formulation

"If a play rises above a certain level of complexity, competence and originality, the reviewer will always reveal more about his own theatrical and personal attitudes and beliefs than he will reveal about the play."

Williamson 1978

The total effect of this critical barrage was liberating. I came home to face that indubitable giant killer Greg Curran with equanimity. *The Brownstone*, as thundered in these pages, is not a well made naturalistic play. The Sergeant is full of inconsistencies and is therefore not a credible character. He talks the recruit there is no graft at his station and later on we find there is. He says that he never makes arrests and the first thing he does is make one.

I could have told Mr Curran that *The Brownstone* wasn't a well made naturalistic play eight years ago, and that the Sergeant, because of his inconsistencies, was played to for every actor who plays him, but what the hell. Better that he's tagging away happily on his typewriter than making a nuisance of himself out on the streets.

# John Larkin Hoopla!

## A Theatre in Search of an Audience

Hoopla has a lot of names.

It began with it began as the third national theatre in a city which did not need one.

Melbourne had been waiting rather laboriously on its permanent reserved seat at the MTC. And while not so visible on the austere benches of the factory for the APG productions up to them, the loyal staff there was fairly proud, also, to be part of becoming establishment-walkers' staff.

Hoopla, what it does, is strongly in favor of supporting Australian plays. It also believes in bringing to Melbourne one of the best productions from outside.

As a kind of dress rehearsal for what could be its approach when it started properly at the Playbox, it borrowed last year the Grand Street Theatre and put two Australian originals, being *Charley Aunt* de Coven, and *The Golden Oldies* by Dorothy Hewett who had never before played professionally in Melbourne.

Then, for its launch at the Playbox it used *the Rock Old* by Tim Gooding which, despite some by almost everyone at the Playwrights' Conference in Canberra the previous May, was a shocking flop: an 'art' which left about with enough money only one more show.

They would never again have such an enormous error of judgment, even though a few people, this winter included, believed *Rock Old* to be outstanding and congratulated them for having the guts to have a go, in spite of masterings all about the word to be "practical". They tried.

For the situation of being just one play ahead of the chairman would continue. Three days though, the position is almost normal, even hopeful, for they came to accept life on the edge.

And positive they have been.

They did another bold thing, after the *Rock-Old* reviews shredded it. They called all the critics in for lunch and asked them how they thought Hoopla had gone along in choosing such a show.

Everybody was understandably, a bit nervous, including the critics, most of whom had given it an abjectly severe. One have even brought his daughter along to catch him up and share his judgment was accurate. In a roundabout way he was showing he was not square.

What emerged through the cash wine and the take away quiche and the somewhat staff-bugged, sitting around each other was the fact that apart from needing



L to R Curtille Genter, Garre Benavises, Gossie Ruedell. Photo Renae Ellis



Rock-Ola, Miss Poppa.



John Wood — *Sulish*  
Photo ©Thane Claitor



revision *Rock-Ola* had withered for want of an audience.

Since then Hoopla has continued to search for that elusive entity which refuses to be identified, which comes and goes as capriciously, sometimes in hundreds, then only by the handful. God help us for those wet Wednesday nights when the rest of Melbourne is home, except for a few in the state there seemed to be many people up there on stage — hanging on, hanging out.

Hoopla is both professional and cheeky. It is also necessary in a city which takes itself too seriously at the wrong times and not seriously enough at others.

The company, with all the appeal of being an outsider in a city where being inside is helpful, is outrageous in its own quiet way. Its talents and its wit have meant survival, against fairly fearsome odds.

The idea really started about the end of 1975, the post-Whitlam beginning which some say also at the end of the world.

A group of individuals, though, thought it should not all stop simply because the sunbathers had gone. They included Carlie Gantner, Graeme Blandell, Bruce Hylan, David Williamson, Peter Dyball, John Wood, Dave Kendall and Garry Hutchinson.

All had different theatre experiences, thought they should share what was happening in Australia — and what was not.

From under that umbrella emerged a few grand schemes for some sort of theatre complex. They spent many months probing their heads in various groups. They encountered some interest, many knock-bucks and quite a bit of scepticism. One leading theatre personality when asked about their chances, reportedly replied: "At this stage Hoopla is purely a matter for conjecture."

But the big Melbourne jolly wobbled a lot more and they got a \$4,000 grant from the Victorian Ministry for the Arts and the MTC let them run out its lease on the Great Street Theatre and they staged *Chubby* and *The Golden Child*.

There was a fairly bright response, but they lost money on it, including about three grand of their own. But still they wanted to continue believing there were many good local plays to be done. Besides they had learned a lot from that experience.

The three of them, Carlie, Graeme and Garry, went ahead and formed the Hoopla Foundation, set up as a non-profit organisation, New Ideas, that would be remained to be seen.

The board was set up with Gantner, Hutchinson and Blandell as the founding directors.

Their backgrounds were:

**GANTNER** — professional actor and administrator. Trained in USA (Master of Fine Arts, Harvard), and Diploma of Harvard Institute of Arts Administration. Worked as a professional actor in the US. Formerly assistant Administrator Adelaide Festival of Arts, Drama, Officer Australia Council and General Manager of the Melbourne Theatre Company (1973-75).

**BLANDELL** — actor and entrepreneur, leading figure in the drama movement which took place at La Mama and From Factory 1964-1975. Has featured in many leading Australian TV series and films. **HUTCHINSON** — poet, producer, critic, writer, advertising in daylight hours. Prominent in La Mama and From Factory's most creative period.

Other members of the board included Lloyd O'Neil, its chairman, book publisher and ardent Australian theatre supporter; Fred Schepers and David Williamson.

The preliminary season behind them, Hoopla kept looking for a home. They proposed a multi-media theatre centre be established in Gordon House, a fine old structure in the middle of the city which had been used to accommodate homeless men before it was shut down. Back in the 1960's it had been a home for aging actors.

But it was not to be for any actor now, on the grounds it would be too costly.

Instead, the Victorian Government offered Hoopla the Playbox, a small theatre just around the Exhibition Street corner from the Chicago and of Collins Street — (it used to be called the Paris and until the wretches moved in).

The Government said Hoopla could have the place rent-free for three years, starting June 1977. They took the offer which was worth \$40,000 a year.

The Playbox, which has had a mixed past, was empty at the time and ailed for them. It was well situated, in the centre of the city (even if most of it did close down at five o'clock) and was well shaped. Big enough for Goddard if not quite high enough for *Mousetrap's Little Mouse Show*. And small enough for a lot of other shows.

It has an upstairs gallery, as well as a room on the second floor where small plays are performed.

The old building has more ghosts than space, with the Hoopla office being three small rooms, one of which is used for making the tea and coffee, storing costumes and going interviews. To the uninitiated it had charm.

But it needed more, and the State Government gave them another \$20,000 by letting the place.

They soon learned the reality behind the romanticism of running your own little side stall.

Simply to keep the doors open cost \$1,000 a week, for staff, telephone, cleaning etc.

Carlie and Graeme take \$180 a week each salary and Garry a bit less. They did not take anything until September 1977. Actors are paid the same during performance and \$160 a week to rehearsal. European gets between \$120 and \$180, including office staff, who consist of Angela Davies, who assists with the administration as well as managing the theatre, a secretary, a part-time PR, a box office person and an electrician.

Asked about the success of their year, Gantner said: "We might not have set the world on fire, but we have had some of the best acting this year." Their response to questions about the company it also enthusiastic, at times over-the-top, some rather amusing, often original, and

occasionally intense. I remember one night Canale fixed me with a blow of his eye on the floor after a show and insisted that if I wasn't going to have a drink with him then at least I should go and write a good review!

So they had a theatre and equipment but no money.

They used it for *The Education of Maximo Perichon* on 10 per cent and with 90 per cent hall houses in the 32 weeks earned \$12,000 when the smoke and grease had cleared.

Then came a lada' month over Xmas in which they lost money, but gave people a good time with the brilliant Richard Bradshaw and his puppets.

Downstairs they kept going with a couple of outstanding shows. *The Classroom Sketches* by Ben Blue and *Let Me In* by Ted Nethers, both of which received good notices. Hoopla was fulfilling itself.

Upstairs, as an extra bonus, the small room was used as a second theatre, staging such early successes as *Murder in Low Half Moor* by Hawthorne Williams and *Endgame* by LeRoi Jones. The room was ideal for small shows of such intensity.

Canada, Hoopla was also busy, putting on *Roger Putnam's Fannyshirts* which was also acclaimed at the Playwrights' Conference, and being associated with a brilliant staging of *The Cherry Orchard* at Memorial University's Alexander Theatre.

The Theatre Board of the Australia Council gave them \$28,000 for the first financial year. They had asked for \$83,000.

But Ols cost them \$40,000 less, including overheads.

Why did it fail, and so badly? The management says they tried to sell on the line of it being a star-studded flash-flash ensemble, while the audience went along

thinking it would be a big musical such as *Goldwyn*. In fact it was a requiem to rock, the death of the dreams of the nation, and nobody much wanted to know. People are still arguing about how it was lost in a gap between generations \$68, it is something of a tall piece, according to Graham Handell who describes it as being surreal.

By the time they staged *Let Me In* after the success of *The Classroom Sketches*, they had about \$25,000. They lost \$7,000 on the show, plus overheads.

Three times now they have wondered whether they should/could/would go on. But they are more or less doing what they want, are having a gradual spend of success and not burning.

Nobody could call them fat or even comfortable as they continue on with enough alibi for one more show. In fact it becomes pretty tricky when you do not know whether to cast a show or not, as in the case of *Sketches* the collection of Australian plays which they took exactly one week to cast. (Still, says Graham, they are glad they did it. "It was key to deal with the past in a friendly way.")

They call their way of coping with our just encounter politics, which they say is just as valid and effective as the more violent stuff. They are happy to keep away from naturalistic slices of life dramas. They want to develop a poetic theatre and out of the three in Melbourne they are well ahead in this field. They definitely have a place. Perhaps the problem is that it has not been quite understood, being part of the way of the future, the more imaginative it's up to the audience still in which the psyche is confused rather than political commitment.

Another area in which they have experimented has been the Sunday night monthly readings of new Australian plays

co-sponsored by *The Age* newspaper and Program books. Out of these have come half a dozen plays which have been subsequently staged by Hoopla. Included have been *Let Me In*, *The First General Pleasure* by Don Scott, *The Proprietary Relationship of the Coloured Daughter* by John J.P. Lee and *Sketches* by Bill Hoot and Ken Edwards.

But it's hard dollar *Sketches* for instance was considered a hit, and its six-week season made \$80,000 at the box office. But that was also about what it cost to stage.

They are still chasing to define their audience. Initially they sought to attract the left of the MTC and the right of the APC. They have succeeded, they think, with the second but not with the MTC. No doubt this has been hand with such blood and guts brutal stuff Gordon Graham's *Kevada*, another Australian play about the use of force, or with the convulsive if slightly by *The Emigrants* to help Victorian Italian Work, but seemed unacceptable to both new and old Australians. Again a word gap in appeal.

The Australia Council helped them with \$12,000 for *The Emigrants* and the Victorian Government gave them another \$40,000 to see them through from June to Christmas.

The directors say they are still trying to find their audience. The process is satisfying both politically and professionally and if talking about something being "commercial" sounds too much like opportunism, they'll quickly tell you they are not interested in self destruction either on the bankrupt system of a theatre being given just enough money to let itself in on glitzy gaps, or in slowly starving away as yet another dead dream in the unshowering fire and dry rot of making it in Melbourne.



Curly Gurner, Curly Hutchinson and Graham Handell. Photo Kenny Ellis

# Sha



# Shadowline II

Mike Mullin, artistic director of  
Theatre in Sculpture

This is a concept of theatre within a concept of  
living sculpture. The concept was initially  
explored in a year of workshops at Theatre  
Workshop at Sydney University. They were  
called Theatre in Class.

After the workshops, the simple sculpture was  
taken to the public. The first showings were at the  
Exonity Balls at Paddington Town Hall. We then  
took them to Arncliffe where we performed them  
to students at the University and also at the local  
caf   lounge to a totally unprepared audience.

We did the same in Wagga Wagga where we were  
participating in the student festival — F.A.S.T.  
In Wagga we also took them to the streets. These  
were the most interesting moments of this  
Experiment.

"Montage" was the first major showing of the  
work. This was an exhibition of 13 individually  
mounted sculptures.

"Shadowline II" is the first attempt at a major  
sculpture, as it is an exposition of the style of the  
work. It is a series of tableaux or impressions on  
one basic structure. It explores man and woman  
against a background of Catholic expressionism.  
One reads religion and having rejected "the belief"  
one still reaches out for "something" to make sense  
of it all. This is explored in the first part.

In the second part, the religion of self is explored.  
A philosophy one might call "romantic  
existentialism" is expressed.

Theatre in Sculpture will present "Shadowline II"  
again in March '79 and will be presenting a new  
work for the Sydney Biennale in May. We shall  
be based at Theatre Workshop at Sydney University.  
Peter Holderness took the photographs.

Performers:  
Don Ferguson  
Ellysa Harris  
Maureen McGrath









her director and finally metamorphoses into Hardy himself. As the drole piano player (and musical director) Terry Clarke is astonishingly apt.

Kate is flowy, bouncy and resilient in Kerry Walker's portrayal. Her own brilliance is apparent in the gags which she has to make work and look comic at one and the same time.

As Stan, Drew Forsythe again showed

himself to be a comic actor of a very high order. He is always meeting to watch and gasps at his technique. Nonetheless, without dominating him, one wonders if he is not convincingly Stan, or was meant to be. He lacks the former's laughter and that fluid elasticity of movement of Laurel (and which John Allen captured exceptionally in the part in the Playwrights' Conference). Unlike a Gary Mardonald

perhaps his own style is too strong to be subsumed in impersonation.

For all its vicarious, and it should be said again that few would not be thoroughly entertained, the production does little to counter the nagging criticism of *Naked* as "brash", stylish and superficial." Be that as it may David Allen is certainly a playwright to watch out for.

Drew Forsythe (as Sam Lurch) *Come With Me*



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Canberra Rep's *Godspell*

## Refreshing theatre from young actors

### GODSPELL THE SEVENTH SEAL

#### RONALD PUNLISH

Immediately there was a different feeling in the theatre. Michael Laneberry has presented an exceptional *Godspell*, performed entirely by young actors, most of them without experience. The word to describe it is refreshing, and I want to add excellent.

The bare stage itself is a break with Rep tradition, where planning, detail, or ultra-elaboration in the set more often weighed it play down than gave it flight. Also, the actors were dressed in everyday gear, which changed from time to time in variation with the mood of a scene, but which always kept them a part of today. Any flimsiness of the costuming-outlines surely would have put the

production back in the school hall. This production would have no part of that.

Another thing which distinguishes this production from so many in the past is the originality of the choreography. It was definitely stolen from Broadway in many unusual musicals, steps are copied from *On Your Mark* or whatever and the kids just can't handle it. I felt that, throughout, these actors were moving in ways they knew.

Andrew Ray's direction of the music was superb. The band didn't overpower the singers, some of whom couldn't master quite enough volume for their parts. The work of the percussionist, especially, stood out.

It is not so much that this production seems to be a break with Rep tradition (which I think it is). By using all young actors, by making the production efforts and theatrical elements relevant to them, and cutting the usual staginess, the director has managed to make his message clear: that if the material is truly relevant to the performers, it is automatically relevant to the audience.

Equally interesting was a version of *The Seventh Seal* at First House, directed by Jo Fleming. Here the task was more difficult, as the heavy symbols of the text are alien to young people in this country. But here, too, the young actors presented this adaptation of Bergman's story rather brilliantly. When the going was getting a bit heavy, they put in comic, obviously, in parody of the grotesque message.

The ending — surely a long passage of the cast in great music before us — was stunning.

I came away from these productions feeling very good: that is theatre experience is truly moving when the performers find personal commitment in their work.

I think, too, that it is a good sign for theatre in Canberra in 1978. Peter Williams, from Adelaide, is taking over the Youth Theatre. And Carol Woodrow, certainly one of the most original directors in this country, is forming her own theatre laboratory to perfect a new method. Maybe we in Canberra are finally learning that we should stop watching little Toms and Big MTC's and be ourselves instead.

J.C.W.'s *Anna and the Kings*

## JANUARY THEATRE IN VICTORIA

MAURICE MURPHY

The month of January is traditionally considered the most capricious month of the year for theatre in Melbourne. The fact that January happens to be both the middle of summer and the height of the holiday season, make theatre companies overly pessimistic about attracting and seeing. By the number of theatres which used to be closed during the month, January is living up to this reputation. The theatres closed are Playbox Theatre and La Mama, Frim Factory and Comedy Theatre are also closed for the greater part of the month.

As if to challenge this theory, the Melbourne Theatre Company is presenting the Australian premiere of *Sodas* by James Saunders at the Royal St Theatre on 13rd January. This production will mark the first professional presentation of a play by James Saunders in Victoria. In fact this play, right, who has built up an enviable international reputation, has been sadly neglected in this country. His plays *After June I'll Sing To You*, *Highways*, *A Room Of Flowers* and *Gossam*, a play based on the My Lai Massacre, have all received much critical

acclaim in both Europe and the United States.

*Sodas* was first produced at the Hampstead Theatre Club in March, 1978. The play deals with the reunion of two couples, who ten years ago swapped partners temporarily. One couple have just returned from America where they have found "therapy", while the other couple, in England have diagnosed as they have surrounded themselves with middle class mundanity. The play examines the differences between existentialism and romanticism. The dilemma of the two protagonists in the play is to try to come to terms with the problem of whether humanity is more than just bodies existing in an environment. James Saunders has always been an uncompromising playwright as his search to discover the relationship of the theatre to the day. All his plays seek to explore how the theatre can best communicate its message to an audience so that it is always an exciting experience. *Sodas* is the most important contemporary play from overseas to be presented by the Melbourne Theatre Company since David Radwin's outstanding *Anders*. This most production will be directed by Bruce Myles and designed by Steve Nolan. The cast of four will be Jennifer Hagen, Simon Charters, Michael Edgar and Ann Haddy who will be making her first appearance with the Melbourne

Theatre Company.

Another significant event for January will be the graduation of the first group of students from the School of Drama at the Victorian College of the Arts. Following the philosophy thrust of this school, the greater number of the graduates are going out into the community to set up companies that will integrate themselves within that particular community. The first of these companies to be formed is WEST which will have its base in the Western suburbs of Melbourne. In 1977, four Evesham housewives and four women from the Arts Drama School formed a group called West Evesham. With a grant from the Victorian Ministry for the Arts and the Evesham City Council, this group collectively wrote and produced a one woman play, *Now* which deals with the life of a middle aged woman living in the suburbs. This play has just completed a season at the Theatre Upstairs at the Playbox Theatre for the People Theatre Foundation. Since the initial production of *Now*, WEST has devised a programme for primary schools in the Evesham district entitled, *Snails, Rabbits and Red*. This production was funded by the Goethe Institute and the Evesham City Council. The Evesham Council have now approved the permanent occupancy of a centrally located hall for the group, so that they can continue to develop their community

theatre in the district. The driving forces behind WEST are Jan McDonald, Ian Shewen, Phil Sumner and Linda Warren. The aim of WEST is to create theatre especially organised to the Western suburbs of Melbourne and the company plans to play in schools, pubs, clubs and parks in the area to accomplish this aim.

The Murray River Performing Group is another community based group to originate from the School of Drama. Over the last three years moves have been formulated to set this company up in the Albury Wodonga Area. The success of the First Fly Fan Festival in 1977 accelerated the drive to establish the Murray River Performing Group. This festival was organised by the students of the School of Drama. The aims of this company are to write and encourage writers the community the writing of new Australian drama based on the contemporary and historical experience of the region and to extend the average audience attendance for live performances in the area. The company has received initial support from the

Albury Wodonga Development Corporation. The first three members of this planned company of eight actors are Robert Porter, Lloyd Squire and Mark Skorrals.

Closer to home, three students from the School of Drama have jointly bought the Flying Troupe Cafe in Factory. The Flying Troupe Cafe has the reputation of being the major innovation in entertainment among the city restaurants in Melbourne. This month the Cafe is celebrating its fifth anniversary. To mark the occasion, the new owners, Sue Gowers, Ralph Korte and Wayne Wood are organising a Festival of the Flying Troupe Cafe which will chart the progress of the Cafe over the last five years in conjunction with the Flying Troupe Cafe Rodney Room, another graduate student from the School of Drama, has formed the Flying Troupe Theatre. This company is touring through the holiday centres of Queensland, Lorne, Apollo Bay and Warrnambool during January. Steve Spears has written a new musical, *Showdown* telling the story of the

development of the rock industry for this tour.

Traditional forms of entertainment have not been entirely neglected in Melbourne this month. At the Princess Theatre, IceCrab are mounting *Sleeping Beauty* as are at the Alexander Theatre Company I M Broom's *Peter Pan* is being mounted for the first time in eight years. John Abbot has revised the original script, Bruce George has written the music and Marie Cornsack is directing. The musical *Anne* is cheerfully continuing its successful season at Her Majesty's Theatre while the Melbourne Theatre Company's Christmas 'cracker', *Arwen and Old Love* is playing at the Athenaeum Theatre. John Pender's first one person show, *I, O Shave's Three Musketeers* and *Three White Mice* followed *Arwen* through January at the Last Laugh Theatre Restaurant. The return to more serious things in the theatre is hopefully headed by Helen Richard's production of *Amadeus* at the end of January.

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Barbara Gailley, Rosemary Barr, Joan Sydney, Leone Martin-Smith, John O'May.  
James Rennie in the National. Puccini's *No No Nones*

Asistent into oblivion. The chorus work and dancing in general matches anything I've seen here, so anyone else for that matter. It must all be put down to the excellent coaching, encouragement and infused expertise of choreographer Barry Scrogh, a man justly revered by the profession but one who, like many such leaders in the vanguard, does not always rate the credit he deserves. I have no question as my mind that it is the sound technique and assurance he gave the entire cast about which allowed that build in overall performance which lifted things to the point where "they up there" were clearly

enjoying themselves as much as we in the stalls.

The director of the show, Edgar Meislich, would undoubtedly be the first to acknowledge his debt to Mr Scrogh, but it would be unfair not to credit Edgar's work as well. He went in for a mixture of plangent nostalgia and subtle updating. I'm sure that no actor in 1975 would have dreamed of dress coat, shirt, bow tie, work suspenders and gaiter underpants, and with those ladies of questionable reputation to boot. Mr Meislich also assembled the best cast imaginable. We haven't seen John O'May live here before

I think, but he proved excellent in all departments. Also Alan Fletcher, who I don't know could even hold a tune, must have at the least been a chairboy, astonishing us by bringing on a lovely gaiter and well controlled tenor.

Seting and costumes were appropriately gay, and Duncan Ord in the show to good effect. I don't think much more need be said. Not even your most rabid searcher-out of hidden meanings is going to find much Karfunkelized in this number, at it their essence. It will draw the large audience it is aimed at and deserves, and they will not go away disappointed.

## A musically brave show

### TOSCA

DEBIE MOORE MORGAN

Seen by Puccini Western Australian Opera Company at Perth's Concert Hall  
Produced by Peter Day

Tosca by Puccini Western Australian Opera Company at Perth's Concert Hall.

Puccini's Tosca was a three-act opera for its human story, unfolding this within the comic triangle of church, torture-chamber, ante-room, and candle-burnt mans for its three acts.

Puccini's November production of the gaily opera by the Western Australian

Opera Company was largely successful in overcoming the lightning theatrical limitations of Perth's Concert Hall for any other concert hall, for that matter, with a basic set cleverly contrived to adapt to the three entirely different scene requirements.

Height was well used to promote a sense of movement by the chorus, and it certainly increased the dramatic effect of the execution scene by making the semi-circular squad of soldiers to fire from above the captive. Tosca's death scene presented extremely in urgent and intense from this same vertical dimension, and the colossal and bold-verging stage descending the battlements, dwarfed the human figures to give a proper feeling of their physical insignificance.

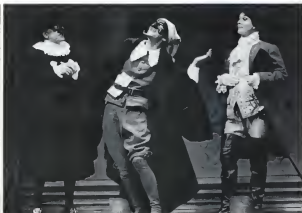
Graham Maclean's work as set and costume designer contributed greatly to

the period atmosphere, and producer Giuseppe Bernasconi's long association with Milan's La Scala further accentuated the illusion of past glories and splendours. Incidentally, the exhibition of over 200 rare posters, paintings, drawings and models set on display at the Concert Hall to celebrate La Scala's 50th anniversary made a satisfying foil to the performance itself, recalling the great days of grand opera.

Catherine David as Tosca displayed her richly-learned voice to great effect, especially at the extremes of her considerable range. Her command of grammar was somewhat limited, and word clarity was often at a premium.

Tenor-Gerald Stern as Cavaradossi gave a equally light weight, but sincere interpretation, which earned a lot of conviction. His delivery was excellent and gestures and facial expressions had a natural quality



State Theatre Co's *Season of Two Masters*. Photo: David Wilson

## ADELAIDE'S HIGHLIGHTS

### PETER FARRILL

South Australia had a year of considerable riches — most of them contained in the programmes for the year's two major festivals.

The Festival of Arts in particular, contained a rich dramatic load which local audiences delightfully mixed with capacity houses. Yvonne Kanner brought his *Crowd* 2 company from Poland and gave the Festival its highlight in its first week. Their production of *The Devil's Chair* exceeded all the pre-published superlatives. This was dramatic theatre stripped to its core — visually intense, wrenching, compelling.

Among other Festival highlights, Steven Berkoff's *Don*, which drew packed houses largely, one suspects, because of the moral outrage controversy which preceded it, but which fully justified its SRO status; the Kabuki company from Japan; the performances of Peter Berman's Comedy trilogies.

The State Theatre Co that stage still the

SATC, before it changed its name to avoid confusion with the local trading club, flew the local flag triumphantly with its productions of *Orpheus the King* and *Orpheus as Caliban*. This memorable Sophocles double bill (driven on Tanya Mousanachi's splendid costumes, Colin George's haunting direction, and Dennis Glenn's proud performance as *Orpheus*).

With a couple of exceptions, the State Theatre kept up this standard all year. The two productions which stick most in the memory were Colin George's majestic realisation of *Peer Gynt*, and a buoyant rendition of Goldoni's *The Servant of Two Masters* for the Italian Festival under guest director Ettore Fumagalli.

At the other end of the spectrum, the State Theatre found two gems of lead — Roger Feherty's *Cedricus* and Chris Gorman's *A Musical of French May*, both of which seemed like ideas in search of completion.

The Italian Festival provided another highlight — the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild Ensemble's production of Goldoni's *Mimichini* (*La Dorandina*) which was a sprightly, enjoyable evening.

Adelaide's two well-patched "alter-

ative" companies, Trimage and The Stage Company, both had great years. Trimage, in particular, seemed born on comedy, along after last year's daring emergence. They took an interesting, if not wholly successful gamble with Keith Gallucci's *Genet*, and produced a play by a promising new local writer, Darren Clarke. The Stage Company is having its share of difficulties, but its membership is a top-notch one.

The State Theatre bore three brilliant young actors into the limelight during the year. Michael Sobey is surely the most powerful newcomer to the Australian stage for many years, judging on his performances throughout 1978.

Linden Wilkinson made a dazzling debut in *The Glass Menagerie*. And Tony Santhanu almost an archetype of the alternative theatre personality, moved into the professional world with an athletic debut in *The Servant of Two Masters* which most people agree was the performance of the year.

But if one has to choose a theatre personality of 1978 for SA, it has to be Colin George. Under his direction, the State Theatre delivered most of what it promised.



## QUEENSLAND OVERVIEW

VERONICA KIBLEY

1979 looks set to be a time of significant innovations for Brisbane theatre, encompassing a creative appraisal of the trends and events of this year, and an examination of their implications for the future. New faces, new policies, new companies, new venues are entering the picture to form an expanded theatrical arena with intriguing potential for theatre both creative and professional, subtitled and commercial. At the time of writing, the exact details of the future remain somewhat unclear, but new year is traditionally the time of innovation, production and resolution, and Brisbane's theatre world is applying itself vigorously in all three areas.

The state of theatre in Brisbane is to be assessed in conjunction with the issues at which it operates. Breakthroughs in this area include two re-inventions and one building operation. The good news story of the year must be the rapid emergence, persistence and as yet partial success of the Save the Regent Campaign. By winning the support of the Senate of the University of Queensland, Watson Mitchell, the unions and the community at large, the Campaign has so far managed to stop the proposed destruction of the theatre and convince the Trustees of the Mayor Estate that the Regent as a venue for profitable commercial live theatre is at least a proposition worth considering. The hope for the future is that the brilliant old theatre will rock again to the sounds of the live shows for which it was built. If so, Brisbane can look forward to a resurgence of large-scale shows, music theatre, dance and concerts in a mid town venue, and, more importantly, the national pattern of touring for subtitled and commercial enterprises may alter with the availability of a large capacity house. Brisbane need no longer either turn out completely on "rehearsal" dates, or attend them in miserably inappropriate venues.

On a smaller but no less exciting scale, the University of Queensland Union is at last ready to go ahead with substantial modifications to the theatre area. Current Box theatre, a handsome unusable space beneath the stage of the highly visible but too patently Schindler Theatre. MIM, Utah, the Senate of the University and the Union have combined to contribute \$90,000 for the conversion which is optimistically hoped to have the area ready for use by the end of March. Not only should the reconstruction of the Current Box make indigenous and working student theatre a group concern on the scandalously theatreless St Lucia campus, but

the inception of a small, tough, adaptable theatre space should inspire theatre companies at large to go ahead with those abandoned projects of timidity and expense prohibited by the demands of large houses. At the moment only La Bonte, a space already pressed to capacity with its various operations, provides an as the venue venue space, thinking that QTC's formidable 600 seat professional SCD Theatre.

The house to watch will be the Twelfth Night Theatre building, administered since 1974 by the Twelfth Night Theatre Trust which is responsible to the State Government to make the building pay. Twelfth Night, the theatre auditions, has 42 weeks of bookings for 1979, starting in January with a local rock opera, *Boyz n the City*, and encompassing everything from musicals and children's shows to the operations of two companies. The Trust hopes that this will be the year of break through for building as a viable commercial proposition, indeed, the maintenance problems of the theatre are of just dropping, vagabond. The theatre complex including premises leased to a club and restaurant was built in 1971 by the dedication and devoted money of supporters of the then amateur Twelfth Night Theatre. The corner-framing of the theatre has bequeathed a building with an inadequate stage, air conditioning, wiring, a professional auditorium that cuts off half the customers, and a roof which leaks like a clock shed in moderate rain — all over the heritage. The Trust faces a formidable task in getting the theatre in a shape to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of Joan Whalley and the Twelfth Night members who saved and gave that the Twelfth Night Company might find a permanent home, let alone the requirements of bars and financial imperatives of the State Government which since its re-invention June 1974 as purchasing the building and liquidating the \$260,000 bank debt, has been the only master to whom the Trust is highly amenable.

The two major companies to tenant this building are the Twelfth Night Theatre Company and the newly-arrived Brisbane Actors' Company. While the building was originally created to be its home, subsequent events have transformed the Twelfth Night Company to the condition of a tenant in this same house. The Artistic Directorship decision has been taken with the appointment of John Milson, as Perth's Hole in the Wall. It is at present too early for details of the proposed 16-week 1979 season, but the premise is there of a resurgence into professional maturity of a Twelfth Night Theatre confident of its place in the community, aware of the existing and impending

repetitive areas and of its rightful and long-awaited place in Queensland professional theatre. All eyes in the new year will be on Twelfth Night, the end in sight of the protracted and difficult transition from its amateur origins to its full status as the State's second established professional company.

The third task follows hard upon — at the end of November the Brisbane Actors' Company, whose since early 1977 and with a considerable 1978 achievement behind it, will form part into a co-operative society along the democratic lines of the Fruit Factory. Apart from an applied for grant from Utah, BAC has established itself so far on the strength of its box office success, combining popular casting, every selling and thoughtful choice of repertoire. Its young public it hopes to involve in its workings the actors and open audiences and community. The first show of its for the new year is already in rehearsal — *The Woman Who was a Flower* plus a Feydora horse, to open 16 December at the Conservatorium Theatre. To follow are the Young Up-Downing *Jeepers* to play at Twelfth Night in March, then *Madness* for three weeks in late April, also at Twelfth Night. Now three times a house, with the resurgence of professional theatre is the city the paucity of suitable venues becomes evident and even the Twelfth Night Company itself may be forced to adopt a play-all-over-the-city policy. 1979 will clearly be the year of the perpetual professionals.

Scarcely from this quiet extension, QTC emerges as the State's second professional troupe. With the end of the eight-year tenure of Joe MacCormac as Associate Director, his position has been filled by the appointment of John Krummelt, a choice which at this point seems to promise continuity and consolidation of the Company's existing artistic policy. I predict that the crucial year for QTC will be 1980 when the competition of not one but two rival professional companies breathing down its neck will necessarily cause a reworking of attitudes and overall rethinking of how the professionals relate to each other.

Meanwhile La Bonte is undergoing a thorough self-examination of what it is, where it is, where it's been and where it's going. The rest of the wit of Rick Bellinghous, an erstwhile professional Artistic Director, appears to finish in March, and the theatre is appraising the results of its three-year experiment with professional ownership. Artistic policy and administration are under discussion, plus financial stages, the latter with a view to eliminating deficit and the patterns which cause it. The theatre is overhauling its structure and group policy, and assessing its space needs for many projects in search

of a home. Gruffly, La Boie is well out of bed in considering the probable outcome of the minimalist pattern of local production outlined above and weighing up the consequences of the difference of professional work. One of Broadway theatre's shortcomings is that QVC — the state subsidised company — has always implicitly had its artistic pen set by La Boie which, pointing aside for the moment the latter's rival professional wing, is the

Early Childhood Development Project, must be a rarity in Australian theatre in that it is an amateur theatre which most surely challenges the state company. Whatever the future holds, confidence is placed in La Boie for achieving to what it has done, can do and must do. My prayer for La Boie is that it never comes on perch in celebrating and displaying Australian talent, the adventurous Queensland Playwrights' Season of 1977, Steve Wolff's The

Father We Loved on a Beach by the Sea and the premiere of Squares. King Richard this year, those like watchlights in a squally world. Without La Boie, the heart needs to one's thoughts.

People, politics, subculture, theatres — the spectrum, in alphabetical order, for Brisbane in 1979: inspection, ferment, devotion, adventure. The potentially most exciting and creative period in years has immediately ahead.

## Generous, genuine and funny

### THE PRISONER OF SECOND AVENUE

VERONICA KELLY

The Prisoner of Second Avenue by Neil Simon. Brisbane Arts Theatre, 401 Queen St (5 October 1979). Director: George Roberts. Lighting Design: Jason Whiting. Stage Manager: Lawrence Simpson. Mr Hugh Taylor. Mrs Rosemary Taylor. Mrs Fred Jones. Rosemary, from Theatre Libre, Prince of Wales Theatre (Admission).

All year round the city seethes with a continuous ferment of amateur activity in suburban and church groups, play-on-companies like Hunter who have established themselves and successfully gone into sustained operation. Comedies, dramas, children's shows, and musicals form the mainstay of the output, some days it seems that every church hall in town harbours either a *Secret Ring* or a *Prisoner of Paradise*. Brisbane Arts Theatre's *The Prisoner of Second Avenue* nicely exemplifies the pleasure and un-

demanding repertoire which this theatre has traditionally made its own, and packed houses attest that its audience will give their demand support to those companies they consider are doing the right thing by them in supplying light entertainment and occasionally congenial productions.

Mel had just been sacked from his corporate advertising job — no job for a man aged 47 — and his recently devoted wife Edna supports them by going out to work. He slides into a prolonged crisis of identity, expressed through his graphic bellyaching on the media-able theme of the tribulations of high-rise life in Manhattan. As the hero becomes "the prisoner of Second Avenue" his family doubts that something must be done, and who else? In the play's most gaily funny scenes (Edna's scolding and over-the-top Mel's nagging, his brother and three doing natives come to the rescue, champagne meet or less at the ready. Edna is commanded not to worry, it's been all discussed). Mel will be ruled over with the best medical attention money can buy. The sisters meanwhile gush over their "baby" brother and wall-up poor Edna: "I never liked the woman". "It's just jealousy!"

The play's best theme is the intense dynamics of sibling relationships, wittily expounded as practical big brother Harry bemoans: "No-one loved me after I was seven", and admits to Mel that even now had given all his success just to be the family's favourite, even for one hour.

We leave the hero on the way, not, please God, to "bunny", but to a level of satisfaction with the language outside the apartment, and Edna's soliloquy has brought to a degree where she is right there with her Fred is seduced, the favoured son will always conquer. Struggling with laughter the pair of them roll about together as the curtain closes, no longer need either be the sole manning, they will now peep up each other. Although the reality of the pressured honey-bone of New York costume comes across merely as surreal force here in the green and lavishly (props) bed who do New Yorkers assume that living in their unique city is self-evidently the world's most absorbing subject? the conventional bonds, pain, love and struggle of family relations cannot warmly. The cast is excellent, their playing generous, genuine and funny. Arts patrons are being well done by

## Amazement at its utter impossibility

### CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

KE HARDESTY/KEITH HAM

Catch Me If You Fools. Brian Thomas. Twelfth Night. Theatre Libre, 401 Queen St (November 1979). Director: Lawrence Simpson. Assistant Director: George Roberts. Lighting Design: Jason Whiting. Stage Manager: Lawrence Simpson. Mr Keith Ham. Mrs Brian Thomas. David (Musician). Mr Keith Ham. Brian Thomas, from New Queensland, Sydney. (Admission).

It's difficult at present to separate the plays in Twelfth Night's current season from the Snakes and Ladders Game being played over whether the company survives or not. At least *Catch Me If You Can* is providing some excellent local talent with weekly pay packets, a move forward from the Sydney-based productions which preceded it. But the public subsidy ladder or snail still lies ahead, and the door hasn't stopped spinning.

But first, the play it shall reveal who does it in the hope that this will lessen the chances of other companies putting it on. It is a comedy thriller about a husband who tells the police his wife is missing, and whom and who is disturbed by a seemingly odious police inspector, a woman posing as the missing wife, and a clergyman who backs up her story. The motive: an man's will leaving a huge fortune to the missing wife. The twist at

the end: the husband himself does it, and inspector, priest, and clergyman are all in chains trying to frighten and trick the husband into a confession.

Two primary texts of a good whodunit are one, how long it keeps you guessing, and two, when you think back over the plot how often you say to yourself "Of course! Now I see why. How clever!" *Catch Me If You Can*, when I thought back, left me at amazement at its utter impossibility. The only reason one is left guessing is that the three posers go to absurd lengths to keep the audience thinking they're insiders. The author cheats all the way, and presumably having had his script rejected as too improbable by some American equivalent of Whodunit, has decided to inflict it on the live stage, where there aren't even commercial breaks to ease the intellectual and artistic level of the evening. For the audience, switch off the TV, rise from the seats, pay good money, pay taxes to support, and go home happy? For *The Mahabharata*, sure. For *Ararat* and *Old Man* I can believe, for this?

The only reason I can conceive of for Twelfth Night's moderate popularity during this season is that it caters to the social club market — eat, drink, and see something (cheap) not too stimulating, and not too long. If this were an established theatre restaurant, I'd wish it well. To get major public subsidy for such programming is to change the whole nature of

public support for the Arts in Australia, a change which I for one strenuously oppose.

And yet one can't help feeling sorry for Twelfth Night's efficient and energetic manager, Mark Johnston. Our requirement for continued support from Federal and State Governments was audience growth, in that area he has had moderate success. The next step will be to continue the programme the next artistic director John Milton intends for 1979, a season of plays which the program says will be much more substantial in nature. Already the Twelfth Night Company is having to seek bookings in other theatres because it can't get into the Twelfth Night building for much of 1979, it could also be that audiences will react against any change in the kind of plays they come to expect. Do I hear Mark Johnston quietly sobbing as he slips down the stairs to Square One again?

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Mounted troupe performing at Port Adelaide wharves  
Photo: State Library of SA  
September 1938

# STRIKE AT THE PORT

Nick Enright on how a theatre in education show hit the headlines.

Theatre news is rarely new. A third-hand dance may make the best pages or a stomping ballet costume, but ordinary news of the profession is work? Never! And theatre education? Even the term still needs to be explained to many people.

Yet last July a good chunk of an Adelaide *Advertiser* front page was given to TIE. The "hot news" was Strike At The Port, a documentary devised by Maggie, the TIE team of the SA State Theatre Company, and all because we had advertised a free public performance down at Port Adelaide, in the very hall that fifty years ago was the scene of the events we dramatized.

In the winter of 1938, whistles throughout Australia struck in repudiation of the conditions of the new Beeby Award. Nowhere was the conflict longer or more bitter than at Port Adelaide. Federal Parliament broke the strike by a "dog collar act" which forced wharves at the state's pleasure, effectively nullifying the SWP's power. (Before the end of the strike, law in Adelaide four hundred police and a substantial civilian militia had gone into the Port to protect scab labour brought in by shipowners.)

Roger Chapman and his Maggie team had been planning to make a piece on the Great Depression as a means of proceeding thought and discussion among students about their own prospects. Maggie's mentor, John Louis, suggested the 1938 strike as a focus for the TIE programme on the relationship between capital and labour.

John articulated the bones of the play, the events of August and September 1938. We fleshed them out by talking with the people who lived through the strike and the details of Depression which followed.

One couple, Angelo and Nora Conger,

both now in their nineties and still living half a mile from the port, keep a clear memory of those times. Angelo lent us his warbler's log book, which starts at 1908. Its list of cargoes handled, hours worked and pay received is deeply damning. Against the first three weeks of September 1938 he had written, laconically, Strike. A thick line drawn through the income column for those weeks told the rest of the story.

The programme had its first performance at Port Adelaide High School on July 20. It was always intended as a piece for schools, but our debt to the people who helped us led us to play it in the WMA Hall at the Port. That is where the *Advertiser* came in.

Did they want trouble? A matter of public interest? Their reporter, Mr Brian Cull, came to see us. He could not read the script, or see the show as a school, but he came to write his story. We expected a squib in the trade paper. But on the front page, two days before the show at the Port, his story ran across four columns, accompanied by a large news photo from 1938.

Then the show hit the fan.

Mr Allison, the LBE Opposition spokesman on education. "For a group headed by the public to be meeting (and) young people to compare the present unemployment situation with that of the great 1930 Depression is criminal." His Deputy Leader Mr Goldsworthy was less discreet: "A pernicious lot of socialist propaganda."

*The Day Tonight* filmed scenes from the play and interviewed Roger Chapman and Mr Goldsworthy together. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition had found an odd ally in the State Schools Association President who said quietly (according to the *News* of July 25, that drama was an effective way of learning SA history, but

that a play like ours must be treated as history and not as a guide to what might happen in the future. What price television now?

The TDT story was Wednesday. Thursday July 27 was cold and wet, but the WMA hall at the Port was crammed, mostly with wharves and their families, but also by those from the town whose appetite had been whetted by the news coverage. Member Mr Allison met Mr Goldsworthy came. Nor did Mr Cull of the *Advertiser*, though their drama critic Allen Roberts was there.

The night was extraordinary. We were teaching history which was more recent and better remembered than we knew, yet some of the veterans told us later that we had "got it right". Our dance from older wharves so vividly showed the hardness of the underlying class struggle, and the bitterness of a defeat which ended the Union 60 after WW2.

By August we were old men. *Strike At The Port* is back in the schools, where the programme now leads to a workshop on the issues raised by the play. Some students are pro-union, some anti-union; all are aware of the uncertainty of their own economic future.

Our brief flirtation with the headlines was no more than that. Its most pleasing result was the support from teachers and students: the visit of Chelms' Beach High School using the ABC after the TDT story to affirm the value of this kind of creative made formal education.

Involved in *Strike At The Port* were: Les Chapman, Don James, Val Lovelace, John Louis, Chris Mann, Emma Mann, Jack Phillips, Colin Robinson. *Strike At The Port* was devised and written by the Maggie TIE team, and directed by Nick Enright.





China — where arts are truly at the heart of the matter.



Carillo Gantner with members of the Wuhan Municipal Peking Opera Troupe after a performance of *Three Acts in the Chu Family Village*

In September/October 1979 Carillo Gantner, Executive Director of The Huqin Theatre Foundation led the first group of Australian theatre professionals — actors, directors, administrators and producers — to visit China under the auspices of the Huqin Theatre Foundation and The Committee for Australia-China Relations. In twenty days the group saw twenty-five (the performance of traditional Peking Opera, regional operas, modern 'satirical' plays, children's theatre, variety programmes, orchestral concerts, in major venues and a variety of performances in factories, schools, "Youth Palaces" and rural communities. The group visited professional-theatre schools, companies and film studios, and had meetings with actors, directors, writers and administrators at the national and provincial levels in Peking, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Wuhan and Beijing/Guangzhou (Canton).

Wang Yu-Chen is a senior artist with the Huqin Peking Song and Dance Ensemble in Wuhan and a member of the National People's Congress. She had starred as a well-known, melodic folk opera of the region, *The Red Guards of Wang He Lake* which had been created by the Ensemble in 1958. The opera had subsequently been filmed and made popular throughout China.

The disruption of traditional and folk arts, the mass oppression of individual artists and the tight censorship (the Chinese call it "cultural austerity") which for years allowed more than eight hundred million people to see only eight "models" opened during the Cultural Revolution and the subsequent period in which Mao's wife, Chiang Ching and "The Gang of Four" dominated Chinese culture (1966-1976) are all symbolised in Wang Yu-Chen's account of her personal experiences during the period.

"I was born in a poor family in Wuhan. I was twelve or thirteen at Liberation (1949) and I stood in the crowd clapping the People's Liberation Army entering the city. I found singing from my early years so I joined a contingent of art workers in answer to Mao's belief that art should serve the people we went to the country to learn from the workers, peasants and soldiers and perform for them. I was a member of "The Young Pioneers" at that time. We grew up watching new China."

"I am not an ordinary actress. But I played a leading role in *The Red Guards of Wang He Lake* so the Gang of Four called me as a 'black snake' following a 'reaction line'. During the Cultural Revolution they tried to humiliate and one way to suppress me I was forbidden to perform or even practice and my life was

threatened. I was oppressed with a pill (an) and a sign was placed on my chest saying "Reactionary authority!" I was locked in a black room. I could only read newspapers, and watch the films (being sent spring come out). As you could come and parade me through the streets.

"When I got married they sent me a tag card with 'Happiness in black characters. Happiness went painted in the streets saying they wanted me to be happy. At that time I lived in the homes of peasants in the countryside. At night peasants guarded the door so I slept. Sometimes when the people wanted me to sing loudly they shut all the windows and doors. While Gang of Four had heard, those people would have asked up at a slave army. The local Redmen could only sing the songs when learning on the lakes otherwise their neighbours would report them."

"They said I was the leader of an organisation called 'An Army A Million Strong'. Many actors like me were persecuted in mind and body. If an actor doesn't practice for even one day it is a great loss. I was about thirty at the peak of my ability and my name was erased. It takes a long time to restore your skills and our work is still imperfect."

"After the founding of the Gang of Four part of the first things done by the Central Party Commission was the revival of our opera. We

# International

called back actors from the countryside and after only one month's rehearsal we did it again with tears in our eyes. The audience had tears too."

At Nankang University we learnt that followers of the Gang of Four were now receiving somewhat similar treatment, though with much greater ease: as many teachers had had their throats destroyed and some people were killed in the making of the University in the peak of the Cultural Revolution. In the prisons, slightly smaller camps "struggle meetings" are now held at which actors from the Cultural Revolution are paraded singly, garled and in headlocks. Their actions are criticised in front of the crowd who cheer slogans in response.

Elsewhere we were told that "seven followers" of the Gang would be forgiven by the people if they went their way. Many had been "promoted by helicopter" to very high and not on the basis of ability. As they were not qualified in the first jobs they were being intruded to the lower positions they desired. The top criticism of the national Ministry of Culture, which was effectively controlled by Chang, Ching, has reportedly been pointed out, there were over two years since the Gang's fall, the wedding and marriage process is all apparent to be going on at all levels of government.

There can be no doubting the enthusiastic support of Chinese theatre workers (and the mass of the population) for the overthrow of the Gang of Four and the restoration of political stability. In the theatre it has meant a rapid reawakening of traditional and regional styles.

diversity. The main repertoire of traditional opera is again being tapped and works famous before the Cultural Revolution, eg. *The Women General of the Yang Family* and *Three Actresses at the Chia Family Village* are now back on stage. The model operas are now accepted for variety performances but are not staged in their entirety though I suspect they will return. New operas (Peking Operas and others in the multitude of regional styles) are also proliferating.

While Peking Opera is probably the best known form of Chinese theatre outside of China, the most popular form of live theatre in China now, or at least the form that provides the most immediate audience recognition and response is the dialogue play (now also) the equivalent of our drama. It is acted in a style considered naturalistic in China but less compared to the highly stylised and formal Peking Opera, with fairly minimal makeup apparatus for the character rather than the symbolic opera style without musical accompaniment, and in three dimensional, realistic settings (movement of our own contemporary theatre). The themes of these plays are often taken from modern life but they often still contain a substantial and overt propagandist element: not dissimilar then strongly from the recent American drama.

We saw the Shanghai Children's Modern Play Troupe in *The Children's Affairs*, an adult and delicate piece highly critical of the Gang of Four's education policies. It was extraordinary to see the juxtaposition of styles — the obvious intention given to avoid nationalist effects such

as killing ancient houses (rehearsed) with an actor wearing a long and the simple cutting of an apple.

Other popular live club of the moment include *The Newspaper* (in about Chong Ching's possible successor to the RMC forces, *The Appointment* a comic piece involving the unscheduled meeting of lovers on a park bench (we saw scenes in a modern rehearsal), *The Story of The Red Shirt* a highly regarded drama about doctors who resist the Gang of Four, and *Where The Maple Leaves Fall*, *Red* a broad satire involving a group of scientific workers in opposition to the Gang.

In Kowloon's Cultural Park we attended a modern dialogue play in Chatterbox studio, *Another Spring*. The plot (the stage limits and the usually "bourgeois" escapism of the broad comedy were perhaps further from the pure revolutionary line of the Cultural Revolution than anything else we had seen but there was no denying its massive audience popularity). The plot involved around a married man who goes a woman (a doctor instead of sleeping pills for her overworked husband). While the dialogue had plenty of references to "model workers", *The Four Modernisations* and "the Gang of Four", the revivified consciousness of the error involving chaos through the audience, double takes (physical comedy and misreading) led all the logic and significance of the worn American television "song".

The Cultural Park itself is a recreation to the mass appeal of the performing arts in a new stage setting. In downtown Kowloon, the Park has several indoor theatres, two large outdoor stages (one of which a regional opera was playing, on the other one of Kowloon's stunning suburban temples I glimpsed 14 up on a bicycle a basket ball stadium, a roller skating rink,溜冰场 with themselves in three pipe (a restaurant, recreation, tennis, and a "recreation theatre" in the form of three black and white sets on a wall facing seating for about 200, each set showing the same dubbed Eastern European movie).

To modern distribution, current release feature films are now shown immediately on TV, but the Chinese do not expect cinema shows the potent attraction of television for their traditional culture. This must be due in part to the as yet limited private ownership of sets and the seemingly unstable Chinese apparatus for most forms of traditional and modern theatre.

For a theatre worker the real "culture shock" is not experienced in China but on return to Australia where live theatre is a gloriously unpolished, chaotic and minority activity scorned from the level of most people.

The very concept of a "cultural" revolution is inconceivable here and the great Australian landscape I deplore the destructive mores of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China and respect in the relaxed freedom of arts such as Wong Yu Ching but I can only be in awe of a society in which the arts truly are in the heart of the matter.



Student of Chinese Drama and Peking Opera. Peking Opera. Photo: Carlos Gantner



## Australian Centre International Theatre Institute

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President: Prof. Robert Quennell Hon Sec: Dr Maria Thurnsch  
Editor: Candy Baker

### SWITZERLAND

The International School of Geneva will host a Festival of original plays in May 1979. There is no requirement as to length and language, but the script must have social or political relevance and no prior professional production. Selected playwrights will be invited to attend the festival as the expense of the International School. Scripts must be submitted by December 1, 1978 to Rod Price, International School of Geneva, 62 Route de Chêne 1206, Geneva Switzerland.

### SWITZER

The Bubble Theatre Company was founded in 1972 as being live professional entertainment, particularly interest theatre to new theatre audiences. Since 1973, the company has been performing as an orange plastic structure which seats 200 people and can be seen in parks and open spaces in London. Because of the response a larger career has been commenced. The company performs a wide variety of popular classes, Shakespeare, cabaret, folk music, children's shows from March through September. After September the Bubble Theatre

is available by bookings abroad. For further information please contact: Potts Point, Australia: The Bubble Theatre Co., 9 Kingsford Street, London S.W.5, England. Phone: (01) 485 1430.

US/ITJ Newsletter Oct 1978

### SCRIPT EXCHANGE

Since the establishing of a clearing house for new plays at the Hungarian ITI Centre in 1975, 37 plays have been received at the Australian ITI Centre. These come from Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Poland and the USSR. These plays are produced in manuscript form, complete with information on publishing and producing rights and three copies of each play are then sent to the national Centres. Copies are available for distribution to Australian theatres interested in producing foreign plays for production. Contact the ITI office for details.

### INDIA TV

An International Seminars/Workshop on

Main Movements and Concepts in Indian Theatre" to be held in January, 1979 at New Delhi. Dr. Aravind, the Asian representative of the ITI Executive Committee will be in charge. The address for more detailed information is: New Delhi Centre for Arts and Culture (Mr. Rajender Nath), 4 College Road, New Delhi 110001, India.

### COMEDY CONFERENCE

With the help of the Polish ITI Centre, the Mutual Theatre Committee will be holding a seminar on the evening of musical comedy performers. A small international gathering of interested touring experts will take part in this seminar, which takes place in March or April 1979 in Gdynia, on the Baltic sea. Please contact the ITI office for further details.

### EUROPEAN DIRECTOR FOR NIMROD

The Peter Simonson Foundation — a foundation particularly for directors has set out positions in the following European directors to come to Australia to direct a play:

Francis Zellerbach	(Italy)
George Serbier	(Mexico)
Peter Savai	(West Germany)
Peter Zebek	(West Germany)
Roger Planchon	(France)

It is hoped that one of these directors will direct a play at Sydney's Mosaic Theatre, with the condition that directors residing in Australia can attend in an observer capacity. The play will be chosen by the director and the Mosaic Theatre Co.

## INTERNATIONAL

# THEATRE QUARTERLY

### 1979 ISSUES INCLUDE:

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## Ballet '78

All in all, 1978 was an exciting and rich year for Australian Dance. Not merely for the fact that all the companies concerned continued to meet and actively expand their audiences, but that they were extending their ideas and concepts of dance.

The single noteworthy event of the year as far as dance choreography goes would have to be the world premiere of the Dance Company's *Poppa*, not only the first newly conceived full-length modern ballet in Australia, but arguably one of the most engaging and stirring ones to have. Personally it will find many things in it to quibble about and the basic lines of the structure were hardly worked out the second time around in Sydney, but the Company has had nothing but good reports about it and great enthusiasm from audiences. Perhaps the Company's visits to the USA and Europe over the next two years will make even more people sit up and realise that there is something potent and fresh going on here.

The Dance Company's second season in the Opera House Drama Theatre seems to have succeeded. Two weeks, both performances lasting in time and dramatic point were disabusing to anyone expecting (as they have in the past) good things from Graham Waines and Don Andrie. The cast at least showed that here were two really individual minds at work on different concepts of dance, neither of them at the least overshadowed by Artistic Director Graeme Murphy.

The Australian Dance Theatre goes from strength to strength in Adelaide and Melbourne, at last settled into its seasonal and working steadily on creating choreographic ideas from within its own make. Artistic Director Jonathan Taylor is pragmatic if I ever met one in conceiving the foundations of a strong repertoire on which to build, choosing some of the best works of Christopher Bruce as a point of departure. From there he's adding works by himself, Joe Scoppa, John Blake and Pamela Buckman amongst others, some of them deep, some lively, some light-hearted (yet serious in intent) and some comic.

The programme for the Adelaide Festival, while good and disparate in some ways, gave audiences a hint of things to come in the way of Australian Dance and with Cliff Kussner's *Field* they have a work that will hold and find. The ADT has to fight the fact that the Australian Ballet with its overblown operations at the Palace has effectively killed off nearly all interest in "serious grand" new work in Melbourne audiences. But, as Taylor himself admits, it takes upward years for a company to gain the trust of audiences, find an art that can and work out

an almost foolproof repertoire. By keeping an option open and casting to see which ideas stand (metaphorically) the ADT is being its way carefully but with good sense.

Extremely laudable is the company's ongoing series of choreography workshops performed in the Balcony Theatre in Adelaide. It is just pleasing to occupy the same opening and audience there as The Place used to in London. The Balcony is the sort of rough, well-served and undervalued place where people come only for one thing, to watch the dance and talk about it. The Dance Company used to have the same sort of stage as its Woodhousecroft readers but after one season there that seemed to have gone by the board, more often pity.

A place like the Balcony is necessary for any company to give fledgling talent a tryout before the public eye. Closed workshops are good as far as they go (which is a very fact) but nothing gets the juices flowing like the "trial" of a public performance. Anonymous choreography seems to be a joint and inseparable serious business. There will always be a few narkers of course, but a situation like this gives a creative choreographer the room and the right to fail, pick up the pieces and try again.

As Belter 12 told which more later visiting critic John Farnell noted that the world's the ADT came up with in a Balcony season that he was used were a step ahead of a certain not nationally renowned modern dance company in Britain. It is all a very good, worthy system and one would think that the ADT could take one or two from its own desperation to set up something similar for its own dance in Melbourne. But according to the programme note post-dance of Administrative Peter Belter the ADT would be very happy to shut up shop completely on such theories and get on with the serious business of the next launch of new ideas.

Talking of the Australian Ballet, things are regrettably much the same there as last year. Standards are as low as ever, nobody has gone out the window, slight ball works are passed off with a non-committal shrug (except when being *Allegretto of a Faust* rather than just that) and that was because the corps de ballet was not involved. The one new work from an Australian choreographer commissioned by the ADT Graeme Murphy's *Fallen*, while being fancy and credited in its own right was shockingly so-called by a critic that couldn't give it dance.

Although it is fairness on the other part, for a start there are too few dancers called upon to do too many performances. A heavy performing schedule is

not always a bad thing (The NCB does not do it) but look at some of the things the AB dancers are asked to do! On some nights they are asked to dash from the classic poses of *Swan Lake* to *The Dream* and automatically switch gears into the loudly strutting rubbery darky contractions of *Black Catwalk*. On others last year's season in Sydney, last the corps was lumbered with 15 continuous performances of *Adriens Le Fils*. May God bless his soul in death standing up as I know! Who wouldn't get demoralised with that sort of regimen. It is inconceivable public service planning of the very worst sort.

At the time of writing the AB has not released its plans for the 1979 Sydney season nor has any announcements about the new Artistic Director been made. The public appeal for funds for the new premises in Melbourne goes on apace. One hopes they reach their target soon so that this desperation for less office reduces day-down a little and when money is made will be ploughed back into the company so they can finance some good works from overseas choreographers or at least get the permission to go down some of the classic works that overseas schools can take as a matter of course but which audiences here have never even heard of. By this I do not necessarily mean those avant garde works with their schizophrenic music and contortions and "wings" but who is really making the "national" decision in the Australian Ballet these days anyway?

— WILLIAM SHOBRIDGE —

Ballet 78 came and went without revealing anything exciting or even interesting in my opinion. Almost everyone came along with "the select and select piece from our current repertoire" and I've afraid all of them struck me as uniformly dull.

The ADT's *Fiddlergiblet*, choreographed by Jonathan Taylor, although theatrically enlarged and developed from when I last saw it, still seems and is by Nevertheless, the ADT dancers bring off the best looking men around, almost brilliantly in it and it was quite funny when it is rather pretentious way.

The West Australian Ballet presented *Jejaja* Carolyn Night Song a very well-known, grade on the top piece of balletic technique, duets, poodle. It had some extremely elegant partnering and partnering mainly of the drooping, leaning and arching sort but overall it was too puffed, rather like a faded Eisenhower masterpiece.

Nevertheless, it being the first chance for me to see the Company. I was glad to see it used a stretched classical technique as its base and only made me wish that I could have seen the Company in some of the Rousmanville pieces.



Yes, Tina Ophelia and Monica Morgan danced on Peggy Lee's  
Photo: Robert Hartman

that these three was not the story. This has also begs the question: why has the Australian Ballet neglected this great classical choreographer?

The Queensland Ballet starts up with Gail Whitch's *The Visitor* and as much as I enjoyed Mr Whitch's performance as a dancer, I have yet to see much strength in his choreography. In the company of his designs created for the late and lamented Ballet National de la Vierge using a Tchaikovsky string quartet as its musical background, portrayed a nice range of love and intrigue between a mother and daughter and a stranger. It is a chore program with opportunities for a great ballet (Aachen used it in his *Mothers in the Country for the Boys*). Ballet as well as "hippi" dancers, women are underrepresented throughout. Peter, too, Whitch and his dancers seemed to shy away from it all. The dramatic substance fell apart alarmingly half way through and the choreography lacked sufficient wit and invention to carry it through on a strictly visual level.

Gordon Murphy's *Baroque for the Dance Company* I have reservations about mentioning it is meant to be a part of a trilogy based on Sydney life which will be seen in full at that time later this year, and I would prefer to talk about it in full then. Suffice it to say that I agreed with Clive Barlow in that it was a "one shot bullet" and far too specific in its references to be interesting for a lot of people, although the Lindsay Roberts creation will no doubt live in it as set on Sydney's Lady Lane Beach (the main

view) and catalogue all the various, fables and (in the ballet at least) allegorical references of the place. I somehow think that here Mr Murphy is being just as free and ready as those he is castigating. The thing at the moment is an "in joke" and charmingly blinkered. It took me some time to realise, with all these people clambering down these two steep ladders, that it was set on Lady Lane and I presently found the place! I also have yet to see anybody being gaily lapped there as Mr Murphy portrays. Nevertheless, it had some aspects charmed me as it and I will watch the full trilogy with bated breath.

Of Gerard Sobotta's *See Semblance* using the point of that name from Brian's *Inner Cosmos* as music, I cannot really say anything without being unfair, it was so appallingly danced by the steps of the AB. From what was fairly perceptible of the choreography as the music of the on stage home run, it would say that Mr Sobotta had used his legs had not been quite satisfied in his choreographic demands, was self, serious and workaholic full explanation for being I know but at least I'm trying). There was nothing to hold the imagination, for *Auerbach* was ventriloquised by an powerfully descriptive music, so much so that the ballet was overwrought, overacted and vague.

Was Sobotta typed in as a less dramatic musician by the Australian Ballet because there was nobody else to create something for them? If so I can only sympathise. Mr Sobotta is enjoying the best of a poor deal, but I'm afraid

that less favourable reviews usually than ought with the fall of the curtain.

Altogether then, the Aboriginal Dancers from Arnhemland were generally good in their discipline and movements their classicality and usually observed manner well, yes, their hard work was noticeable.

If Ballet 78 really was the choreographer of *Australian Dance* this year then I would be profoundly depressed, but it wasn't. Everyone was too careful at too initial at too over concerned. John Percival and Clive Barlow each at their own way were comfortable about some aspect of the festival. I didn't share their enthusiasm. But then I know the reviews of these companies. I hope I recognise the more things they can do on their home ground when they are not part of an official cultural festival parade, and therefore knew that Ballet 78 was not a representative festival.

I agree with Mr Percival who hoped that there would be a Ballet 79 and 80 and so on, and that the interest should grow and expand, and that there should be more companies, invited including the "amateur" companies. I also agree that thought should be given to finding a similar overseas company at the same time thereby turning the whole experience into the exciting reading you like the *Colgate Trust* Forum. It will cost time and money, but come to the point it will take a hell of a lot more attention than there is at the moment. If you everybody especially the administration if it is to be given a fighting chance.

## TV and 3d operas

My opera diet kept downward a few notches on the professional scale with the end of the 1976 seasons of the State companies early in November, and Australian Opera concluding its year and brief forays to Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane following the end of its major winter season in Sydney.

The only live performances I saw during the period under review this month were in Canberra (and on the outlying outskirts of Sydney) though ABC television came up with a rather intriguing series of four consecutive Sunday night offerings that together provided the most meaty operatic fare of the month.

Television opera, of course, is its genres artists alternative to the real — that is, live — thing; nevertheless, it must be accepted that it is inevitably the most inherently antagonistic of all the performing arts for the simple reason that it involves so many more performers and back-up staff than the others, must rely increasingly on the electro-mechanical media if it is to reach the mass audience which is no doubt essential for its survival.

The ABC series was a perfect cross-section of the TV opera spectrum: half

recorded live in performance, half studio work, half serious, half comic, three quarters in English, three-quarters Australian made. The success rating bore only the most approximate of relationships to any of the other factors involved in this fascinating series.

The only interquarrel success of the four was the ABC's *Pro Dancels*. Second was an Australian studio production of Ravel's one-act, *L'Heure Espagnole*. Third in order of merit was the ABC's *Lacrimae Amarae* starring Joan Sutherland, while the field was trailed by an unbelievably bad British production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Trial By Jury*.

TV is inherently incapable, of course, of putting across either the full visual impact of large-scale opera or its full aural impact; the men-serve obviously cannot cope with crowds without making them look like ants, and the quality of sound that emanates from your average home TV receiver is far below radio FM stereo — a strong plea for synchronised TV-FM sound broadcasts which must come in increasingly into vogue in the future. Everything I am about to say, then, must be deemed to take into account such

sweeping generalisations about the problems in general of televised opera.

*Pro Dancels*, the better of the two productions recorded live on the theatre, was even more successful on TV, whereas *Lacrimae Amarae* was even less successful, but that is partly due to the differences in the works themselves. Dancels demands no stage spectacle anywhere, and even in the flesh the AO Lacrimae ignored the opportunities built into the piece.

It gave me great pleasure, when the AO Dancels first saw the light of day at the Sydney Opera House, to be obliged to withdraw my advance opinion as to its inclusion in the repertoire of a national opera company like the Australian Opera. It was no surprise, but none the less pleasurable for that, when the TV version proved to be even more satisfying.

Highly intelligent camera work gave every TV viewer the opportunity to experience the sort of detail only a very small proportion of a live audience, those in the very front section of the stalls, could experience. Moments of facial expression were captured in close-up, practically all the sound sight gaps in the original were underlined. The few alterations of detail



Robert Gird (Pro Dancels), Ned Warren (as the Clavichordist) and Graeme Davis (jigged) in the ABC's *Pro Dancels*

reintroduced during the transfer as no way did director to the original coherence of the chronologically card-board cut-out good action.

Robert Garai's *Don Quixote* was even more effective dramatically than on stage, though even the inadequacies of TV sound could not disguise the differences he had in realising some of the atmospheric notes in the score. Ned Warren Smith and Graeme Thom were as lovable as pair of much-forgotten ever even as depraved, unnecessarily of much of the misadventure of one of their better scenes (the one where they hide behind phoney washing hanging out to dry and interact with the aid of trap-door long johns) did. Dennis O'Brien and Heather Begg came over magnificently, as the characters of English nobility they are, Isabel Buchanan's *Julietta* was as sweet and sweetened as even, Donald Sinden's *Matteo* suitably towering of stature and voice even within the inevitable semi-circular of the film.

*L'Heure Espagnole* is a whimsical, slight story set to music of higher stature, as composed to the more equal artistic wedding of whimsical plot to light music which is commendable in *Don Quixote*. In a way, *L'Heure* is a good piece for its undeniable musical merit, but it is well-nigh impossible to stage effectively in the flesh in the absence of a competent baritone who is also an equanimous strong man from the local circus since he who tackles the role of *Hernando* the audience must be able to cut a grandfather clock

stuffed with human cargo up and down stairs.

Let it be said that the ABC scored a couple of real coups in casting this *L'Heure Espagnole*, one of which was engaging John Pople for the role, not only can he sing the role very well indeed but he has a sufficiently robust physique. I should think, to be well able to creak at least a good stab at the clock carrying bit.

The other coup was in engaging Garai for the role of *Torquemada* the clockmaker, for English is a superb character actor who is at his very best in playing just this sort of skin-crawling economic sort of role (because his men stole capture in *Waverley* at the 1975 *Adelaide Festival* and also, subsequently, on ABC TV).

The rest of the cast for this effort were scrupible rather than memorable. John Main was OK as *Lover A*, Contralto the part, as was Grant Dickson as *Lover B*, Don Inigo Gomez, the aging banker. Beverly Bergen was quite good as *Concepcion*, the house of *Amoroso* cousin, too, the female vamp as whom the success or failure of the opera must rest.

Third on the merit list of this lot of TV operas — and a long way behind the first two — was *L'Amore Ragusa*. Its rather shortcomings reflected accurately the shortcomings of the original AG live production of which it was an all-too-neatly revised.

Joan Sutherland was of course superb in the title role, as was Margreta Elkins in the

part role of *Marta Orsini*. Ben Strenson was equally as successful dramatically as he had been in the flesh, and so more pleasing vocally. Rob Adman belted out Don Alton's notes and produced overall the fine standard of movement which characterises all roles I have ever seen him play. *Ensayo* also in the large cast of some principal voices was just good.

The whole thing fell down badly, as had its stage precursor, on the production front — George Ogilvie's direction and Kenneth Fendrickson's designs came over no better on TV than they had in the theatre. Well perhaps marginally better, for TV is able to excuse many of the visual errors of a production like this by discreet use of the zoom lens and the close-up.

I had looked forward immensely to the *First By Jove* imported from Britain to conclude this series partly because I have a special personal affinity for the piece (I made my G.A.S. debut and winning so many years ago, as one of the juries on an American high school production) and partly because of the mouth-watering prospect of seeing the piece done by a top line British cast all of whom have sung with the English National Opera (Norma Burrows, John Brockbank, Ross Stirling, Denis Kessling, Harold Blackburn) under the baton of Australian expatriate conductor Charles Mackerras.

In the event, it was asked. The designs for this Granada Television production belonged to the busy rock TV quiz show genre. The performers, by and large,



Norma Burrows and Ross Stirling in ABC TV's *First By Jove*

# Opera

seemed hellbent on proving the old adage that G & S is a closed book to opera singers. There were moments when I suspected it was all deliberate, that they and their director, Peter Foster, had actually set out to create some kind of subtle spoof. But it was all so unbelieveably wrong and garbled that I could only conclude, finally, that they was not the ones.

Like the earliest seasons, all the players bent time all but visually with their entire bodies, produced a performance that was just about impossible musically but evoked the feel to an utterly momentous use of convulsing clag. I could go on for some time listing specific grand than pan, but there is no need — and anyhow I haven't the heart.

On the low front, a flurry of just and activity in Sydney produced more than its fair share of interest but not a great deal of memorability. A Conservative Opera School production of Otto Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed by Ronald Jackson and conducted by Gerald Krug, provided just about complete justification for the present-day neglect of the piece.

Geoffrey Cook made a good fist of Petrarch in the Coo production, and Glenn Winfield was a very impressive Peneus while David Watson turned in a rather nice caricature of Dr Curran in the aging department. The rest of the rather large cast of principals was quite even, but nothing was very memorable about them or the orchestra — or, indeed, the production as a whole.

By and large, of course, the frustration of amateur league opera is the perennial hope that one may encounter some previously undetected talent on the back of bigger and better things, it is virtually inevitable if one clings to the highest standards of critical evaluation, that one will be disappointed at the Coo, or Canberra, or suburban Rockdale. The Merry Wives I have just been talking about was basically a student success, and as such it was just about what one might have expected in advance.

Piqued by a rather rapturous review in the daily press, I went even further off my usual beaten track a few days later to see another student production, the one presented by the third year graduating company at the National Institute of Dramatic Art. The work being staged was the Brecht/Weill classic *The Threepenny Opera*; the production and performance so far above the standards one has a right to expect under such circumstances as to provide one of my pleasantest operatic surprises in years.

Sitting from the very front row, where inevitably some of the stage illusion was lost — nothing, perhaps could have effectively disguised the fact that the Madelon of this production, Peter Conway, was not quite mature enough of voice and manner to be a convincing highwayman — this was a remarkably effective realisation of one of the great all-time pieces of musical theatre, one which previously defies praise being it is, complex, lively, gleeful and lost in the amateur opera stamp while at the same time

never for a moment losing the common, even grace, touch.

Yet Conway, inadequately disguised, and perhaps a dangerous, youth, was the only quality about his portrayal of Max the Knife — he clearly demonstrated he understood the character for the rather spirited manner of doing, even thuggery and human undertone claps it all that he is. Robert Grubb was a superbly awful Peachum, thoroughly believable as the highly unscrupulous proprietor of The Beggar's Friend Ltd. Katrina Foster, as Mrs Peachum, and Diane Smith as Polly her daughter and Penny Cook as Lucy Brown were all marvellous caricatures of the characters they played.

None of the singing, of course, was really of operatic quality — but then, the piece doesn't demand it anyway. What finally could not fail to win admiration for this Threepenny Opera was above all the absolute involvement of the performers from beginning to end, that, coupled with a thoroughly acceptable standard of dramatic and musical achievement throughout, made this one of the most satisfying evenings I have spent in the theatre in a long while.

The musical director, Roma Conway, did a magnificent job of bringing *The Threepenny Opera* to life with a band of four (she herself playing piano and electronic organ as well as co-ordinating the whole shebang) and George Whaley's direction was clean and correct.

The major live offering I saw during the period under review, a Canberra Opera production of Mozart's *Major Flaut*, suffered from some disturbing technical lapses — though I had no compensations, in particular in the choral department (Kluge and Chorus, the night I heard it, was beautifully full-voiced and melodic, with not a scratchy edge to be heard anywhere).

Individual acting and singing houses went to Colin Slater's Papageno — quite a different character in appearance to the feathered Macconaghie and Pongles we have become accustomed to in the 1975 Australian Opera production designed by John Sandilands, but thoroughly convincing in all ways. Margaret Kim was a warm Pamina and John Main produced a pleasantly sunny Tamino without over sentimentalising very much dramatically.

John Richards coped quite well with the famous vocal caprices that fill her lot as Queen of the Night, and Bryan Dowling was an unbelievably effective Sarastro who made some very pleasing, full-throated sounds but seemed to be having difficulty at times.

Brian Bell's production was straight forward and gently effective, though lacking any particular memorable masterstrokes. Quentin Hole's stage settings worked well in conjunction with Peter Cooke's costume designs imported from Brisbane following the August production of the Queensland Opera Company, when of course they were part of an overall Cooke design staff.

Ayns Henderson was a neatly capable conductor who did, however, have some difficulty in mounting an ensemble at times — particularly at moments during the difficult, and exposed, overture.



John Main (Tamino) and Colin Slater (Papageno) in Canberra Opera's *Major Flaut*.  
Photo by Ron Cook





## Blue Fin lacks the magic of Storm Boy



Greg Rowe and Hardy Kruger in *Blue Fin*

The South Australian Film Corporation has not got another *Storm Boy* or *Blue Fin* perhaps because the Southern Blue Fin isn't as cute, though a handsome enough fish, as quibbly interesting as a pelican. In fact pelicans do make a brief appearance in the film, but they are merely a token while a great deal of footage is devoted to the catching and landing on the ship's deck of tuna, downed to the sea.

There are certain similarities in the films. Both are derived from books by the South Australian author Colin Thiele, both have scripts by Simon Borg, both have as star, or at least as chief attraction, young Greg Rowe (now thirteen), and in both films the theme explores a difficult relationship between a son and his father. It could be added that both films are beautifully photographed in beautiful wild bits of the South Australian coast.

The difference between the two is a matter of tone, which may indeed be a matter of direction. *Blue Fin* lacks the mystery, the suggestion of a closed society, of *Storm Boy*. It is really a symphony rather than simple story, and there's the rub. The people in it are making a living in a way they choose, so one cannot visit them

homes. When one of them is in trouble everybody rushes but this is no more than what happens in, say, the cinema factory.

The most effective scene occurs when Smoak (Greg Rowe) is tipped over the night-dark sea when another tuna boat, the Dog Star, (Dog Star pays for this by being burned at sea) catches on too close to Blue Fin. A crew man, Smoak's mother's boy friend Sam goes in after him. For quite a while there is no sound but voices calling to the dark. The waves are quiet, the wind has dropped. It is very eerie and the expectation is of a lurking shark at the very least.

Some very clever things have been done to make a most realistic near-disaster caused by a most unrealistic "water sport". Smoak survives this and in a series of events that are distinctly got what — he pumps the water out of the boat, stops someone looking from the beach, makes himself a job of cold stored peas topped up with marmalade, finds the first aid box and gets a band-aid for his big dad who can't make more having had his leg broken in the upheaval, and unaided constructs and abandons to the sea, as police reports say Smoak then gets the

angus going and, with a makeshift litter, heads for home. Smoak and his dad, played by the cuddly German actor Hardy Kruger (Kowalew and Cybele and lots of films in deserts, jungles and the German army) swim back to find the inhabitants of Stormy Bay muzzled on the wharf, cheering them in. And not a word about the rest of the sea men crew, lost at sea.

Hardy Kruger is quite effective as grief daddy, Elspeth Ballentine plays his wife with impressive charm, and John Jarratt makes a very appealing Sam. The music score is by Michael Carlos, photography directed by Geoffrey Hutton, direction by Carl Schultz. Matt Cunliff is executive producer and the producer is Hal McIlroy.

Greg Rowe is talented and appealing and it can be seen the films doing well, playing to children in Australia and worldwide. But it will not hang in any adults, as *Storm Boy* did. And though I suppose it is a subtle clue to catch a big shiny fish while it is on a feeding rampage and out of its little charms and show it in a tank, such an operation lacks magic, a fact that may be reflected at the box office.

## Art of the recorder and Boccanegra



Recordings entitled *The Virtuoso Recorder of The Art of the Recorder* are normally very close to the kind of recital programme that might be put together by a brilliant soloist on this ancient and simple instrument, replete with such outstanding success in one century. Such anthologies are certain to represent several periods of musical history, but they generally do so in a quite unsystematic way.

The immediately striking characteristic of the two-disc set assembled by the late David Munrow, some of his fellow recorder players and members of his Early Music Consort of London (HMV awarded *First Record Club Award* 3) is that it is a genuine attempt to represent all the principal periods and styles of recorder playing. Munrow begins with an often-recorded English dance of the 16th century which he plays on a unaltered pipe approximating to one of the modern instruments of the Renaissance recorder. He follows that up with a 14th century Italian *salterello*. That *salterello* has been recorded many times sometimes quite brilliantly, but never as brilliantly as it is by Munrow. He adds to the surviving version of this dance four dancing improvised variations in what is known as the style of the period. Next comes the earliest known published piece of music actually designated for recorder. The date may seem surprisingly late (1529) but the extensive use of most Renaissance instruments antedated by many years any music specifically scored for them.

Listeners who regard the recorder merely as a toy or as a child's instrument

must find it surprising to learn how many distinguished and perhaps unexpected people have shared this affectionate regard for the recorder. Benjamin Britten was a keen supporter of the recorder since an Abbotsleigh. The Scherzo he wrote in 1955 for some of his fellow players in this group is one of the well-chosen pieces which represent 20th century composition for the recorder in that art. Hindemith wrote a trio in 1932 which seems to have been the first piece written by an important 20th century composer for the then recently reawakened instrument. Hindemith took part in the first performance. This trio is represented in *The Art of the Recorder*, as demonstrated by Munrow and his colleagues.

An Australian piece also finds its way into this select company. Nigel Butterley's *The White Turned Warbler*, a brief piece using serial technique which he wrote for Carl Dolmetsch and Joseph Saxby during their Australian tour in 1965. It has won the intervening thirteen years well and seems likely to hold its place as one of the best pieces written in modern times for the instrument. Peter Dickinson's *Minister Music* is an interesting recent (1973) representative of a genre of recent composition in which pre-lapied playing is combined with an performer's playing in real time.

Between the earliest pieces — and Munrow usually provides convincing reasons for appropriating them for his purposes — and these 20th century compositions, the set takes in its stride choruses, dance pieces and a fantasy from the manuscript, Purcell's vibrant and still occasionally startling *Pavane*, three parts upon a Ground (which the late Thurston Dart convincingly declared was originally meant for three treble recorders with continuo), concertos by Vivaldi and John Baroque and a whole range of baroque pieces in which the recorder (usually, but not always, a treble) is employed for obbligato purposes. Handel, Bach and Arne are the composers principally represented here, and it is certain that this side will be of most interest among the most frequently played sections of the set. Norma Boccanegra says the aria from *Castrato* 268, usually transcribed as *Sleep My Slightly Crazy*, which is more often heard in one of a series of arrangements than in its original form for soprano, two treble recorders and continuo. Richard Lloyd, James Bowman and Martin Hill are the able singers employed in several pieces in this section.

It goes without saying — but I'd better mention it all the same — that Munrow and his collaborators, and original instruments or instruments deliberately pretreated after surviving instruments (varying as well as wind and continuo) and that Munrow employed instruments which make a clear distinction between the

characteristic qualities of the Renaissance recorder and its differently shaped baroque successors. The baroque recorder is the one that has been most widely revived and is usually the form of the instrument available in cheaper plastic models. The Renaissance recorder is less good at playing high notes and has a more restricted range but compensates for this with a stronger tone in its lower register. This is a thoroughly recommendable set which includes some of the best recorder playing ever put on disc.

Verdi's *Savio Boccanegra* will be back in the Australian Opera's repertoire in its 1974 season. It will be interesting to see whether some changes of casting reflect this production with the impact that Verdi's music deserves. The piece is notoriously dark in colour — negatively gloomy, as some listeners complain — but anyone who has seen a performance of it with first-class singers in each of the main roles and with a conductor of a high order to bring it all together knows that the opera can then seem not merely one of Verdi's interesting partial successes but a complete masterpiece. The standard HMV recording of recent years had the benefit of Tito Gobbi's performance in the title role, some moving passages in the singing of Victoria de los Angeles and some moments singing by Boris Christoff as Fiesco. It originally appeared in 1950 and was later re-recorded electronically to give a stereo effect. Though Gobbi's performance in particular will always be a personal drama to pleasure for one interpretation of the title role I feel that the set as a whole has been superseded clearly by the recent recording conducted by Claudio Abbado with La Scala forces (DECCA 2740 269 1-2). Abbado on almost every page of the score establishes more vivid dynamics and more elegant phrasing, than Santus did on the older set. Piero Cappuccini is far more involved and interesting as Simon than he has been in some other recent parts. Mirella Freni is a lovely Amelia in stoned and in general recorded presence, Jose Carreras is an energetic and involved Gabriele and the other bass and baritone roles are in the sure hands of Nicolai Ghimpu, Josef van Dam and Giovanni Fainini. Abbado exercises his masterful influence on every role and every aspect of the orchestral and choral performance, and the quality of the sound is admirable in every way. This is the set with which to go to know the opera. Please understand, however, when you see and hear the Australian Opera's 1974 performances that not many other productions of the work are as consistently well and as this recording. La Scala is one of the few houses in which a house may hope to hear singing of an uniformly high standard as this informed and governed, by thoroughly Verdisan conducting.

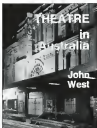
## Australian Theatre and Drama



preoccupation with the ANC which leads him to minimise the large stylistic differences, and concentrate on what the plays are actually about.

A full conscious Australism is a large part of the "new wave", so Ross is an unusually qualified commentator. But his survey of plays with chapters on different playwrights ignores links and influences and does little to justify the claim that this was in any sense a "wave" of its own. He has chapters on "From the New Wave Begins" and the "Secret Cultural Background" followed by chapters on Jack Hibbard, John Russell and the APJ, Alice Burn, the historical plays (David Williamson, female writers, Jon McNeil, Barry Oakley, Peter Kenna supported by various adds and adds) and a concluding section. Other critics have tried to order the material — arguing for example that there are two distinct lines of development: the "masterpiece" plays of sex and family life and the rough comic revolutionary tradition. Ross attempts little such explanation of his subject. The book is a unregarded of isolated pieces about isolated plays and playwrights.

This would not matter were it not that Ross is in any yet the only book on recent Australian play-writing. When other studies appear, to be sure the new Ross presents, he will take an official and valuable place as an account of one theatre-lover's progress through the exciting theatre and times of the early 70s.



A much more satisfying book is John West's *Theatre in Australia* (Cassell) pp \$19.95. It is a pity this did not reach us as long for the Christmas season. It is a beautifully produced book, splendidly illustrated, which takes as its subject nothing less than the entire history of Australian theatre. It is published as a companion to John Cargill's *Opera and Ballet*

in Australia. Obviously a correct idea, to be completely comprehensive, not to be regarded as a critical or scholarly reference work. Considering that it is remarkably directed, and for the period it covers an substantially accurate, although I have heard doubts expressed. West has a modest disclaimer: "This book should be read with every other book already published about theatre in the country, and with the volumes yet to follow from other and considerably, other, hands." If anything in the following pages strikes you as being particularly interesting, it is, I think, safe to say that somebody told it to me.

Unlike Ross book this is one of many of course, but it is by far the most comprehensive and for the general reader the best. The style is anecdotal and slightly breathless. At times the names and dates proliferate so rapidly that you find yourself wondering where you are and having to turn back. The book has the best collection of pictures from theatre, art, available in Australia.



**THE PERFORMING ARTS BOOKSHOP**

232 Castlereagh Street,  
Sydney, 2000.  
Telephone: Patrick Carr  
(02) 233 1658

The cover of Leslie Ross' *Australian Drama in the 1970s* (A. & B. pp \$9.95) shows Tony Sheldon as Ivan in Louis Nowra's *Jeune Femme*. This last exciting play, first produced at Mennan nearly two years ago, gets barely four lines of comment: it is a sign of the pre-occupation with the book as *A History of Australian Drama* Volume 2. A few lists of plays as appendices do not turn this troubling stress of plot numbers and personal tensions into the "national and cultural survey" which the title page boasts.

The subject of Louis Nowra is not lost in any lack of thoroughness on Ross' part. It is simply that the book returns itself to a particular view of "new wave" drama — beginning in the late 60's and developing in the early 70's, exploring Australian life and character in a critical and optimistic way. If this was all there was to Australian drama two years ago it is not now, and although one does not mind Ross to be able to be completely up-to-date in a book which has to go through the lengthy process of publication, perhaps he should have written a little longer.

Within these limitations the book is fairly thorough, as a survey of plays if not as an historical study. It is also highly personal, even idiosyncratic. Barry Oakley and Jim McNeil are given chapters of their own, while Betty A. Hill, Kenneth Cook, Bill Kent, Ray Lawler (for *Alfresco*), Thomas Keneally and Ross Elter are lumped together under the rather strained paragraph that they all are concerned with Australian history or biography and exploring the origins of that South-like state, the *Australian National Character*. R. A. Bell

## AUSTRALIA

## A.C.T.

## BUNRATTS CASTLE (02 2116)

Irish Theatre Residency  
Wednesday to Saturday

## CANTERBURY THEATRE (045 7608)

Canberra Theatre Trust in Association with  
Canberra Opera and Canberra Philharmonic  
Society  
*It's a Wonderful Life* by W S Gilbert and Arthur  
Sullivan. Director: Bruce Cressley. Musical  
Director: Don Weatherall. Guest artists: Jane  
Brookhill, Dean Olsen. (Jan 26 Jan except Sundays)

## CHILDREN STREET HALL

Academy Theatre Workshop  
*Brook's Double Bill* *Oliver* and *Shrek* and  
*Young Children* by Terence Rattien. Adapted by  
Ralph Wilson. Director: Ralph Wilson. Last Jan  
to early Feb

## THEATRE (047 4222)

Canberra Repertory  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William  
Shakespeare. Director: Michael Landreay.  
Opens 31 Jan

For entries contact *Marguerite Wells* on 49 3162

## NEW SOUTH WALES

## ACTORS COMPANY (02 2163)

Cabaret by Maxwell, Kander and Ebb. With  
Anne Phillip. Director: Steve Apple  
Throughout Jan

## ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES

0574610

Summer schools throughout Jan. Call Arts  
Council for further details

## AUSTRALIAN OPERA (0255)

Opera Theatre  
After Filming by the public house  
10.15.34.37.39.37 and 30 Jan  
Concert Hall  
Fidelio. Bonhomme  
15.15.18.30.33.37.39 and 30 Jan  
Concert Hall

*Sons of the Bishop* *Oliver* — leading Soviet  
artists will feature in excerpts from famous  
Russian operas 23.24.26 and 30 Jan

## ENSEMBLE THEATRE (025-4477)

At the Studio  
Festival of Sydney Playwrights  
*One Step at a Time* by Philip Mars. Director:  
Stanley Walsh 27 Jan  
Sideshow by Ken Miles. Director: Tony  
Ingram 9-14 Jan  
*Shaving Hansen* & *Armed Vigilante Armed*  
by Catherine Nelson. Director: Fred Serna  
15-21 Jan

Directed by Derek Mortimer. Director: Gary  
Butler 23-28 Jan

## FRANK STRAINS BULL. N. 0558

THEATRE RESTAURANT (02 4675)  
Magic of Fantasy with Noel Brophy, Keith  
Borwick, Kate Furler, Neil Bryant and Alan  
Narman. Director: Frank Strains.  
Choreography: George Ciolek. (Continuing)

## GERMANIAN THEATRE (02 3023)

*The Magician Days of Your Life* by John  
Dugan. Director: Peter Frie. Throughout Jan

## HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 3411)

*Salome* Flare by Alan Ayckhoun. Director:  
Peter Withers. with Ruth Cusack, Barry  
Coyne, Carina Duncan. East Prospect  
Ron Haddock, Shane Parson. Peter Kewley,  
and Leah Weaver. Throughout Jan

## KIRKILLI PERFORMING ARTS (02 1418)

Kirkill Hotel. Midweek Party  
*The Great Australian Show* by Rick Mear and  
Marilyn Franklin. Director: Marilyn Franklin  
with Paul Chubb, Laura Gabriel, Rick Mear  
Young Susan Asquith, Sharon Sacks  
Throughout Jan

## LISCURIE PRESENTATIONS (045 5676)

*Wain Jones* — folk songs, in *The Festival of  
Songs*

## MARGUERITE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA

(02 1209)  
At the Drama Theatre. Opera House  
*The Abolition of Man* 9-27 Jan

## MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT

(02 6223)  
Created by, owned, written and directed by  
Michael Roddy. Throughout Jan

## MUSIC LIGHT THEATRE (02 6302)

Directed: a musical revue starring the Topanga  
family and Les Young. Throughout Jan

## NEW THEATRE (02 3403)

*Amis*, River the Australian musical by Dick  
Diamond. Director: Frank Barnes and part of  
the Sydney Festival. Throughout Jan

## NIMROD THEATRE (02 5600)

Upstart  
Jumpers by Tom Stoppard with John Cook  
Graham Tarrant, George Whaley, Barry  
Loren. With Tim and Mary Bell. Director:  
Ken Hester. To 31 Jan  
*Melrose* *Red* by American playwright Alan  
Bass. Director: Ken Hester. From 25 Jan  
Dramaclub

*Once Was a Lady* by David Allen, with Kathy  
Walker, Henry Seggs and Drew Forsyth.  
Director: Richard Wharton. Throughout Jan

## Q THEATRE (02 14011)

*Old King Cole* by Ken Campbell. Director:  
Ken Jackson 5-20 Jan, Periods 22-27 Jan  
Barrington Man. Sat 2 shows a day 11.00 am  
and 7.00 pm

## ROCKS PLAYERS (02 5405)

At the Green Hotel  
Strip are French adaptations of 19th century  
baroque comedy Part of Festival of Sydney  
Director: David Cook. Wed. Sat. 8.15 pm 3-10  
Jan  
At the Crown Restaurant  
*Amorphyse* for Lesbian restaurant theatre in  
Potts Point. A part of social satire. Part of  
Festival of Sydney. Fri & Sat at 8.00 pm  
Throughout Jan

## SEYMOUR CENTRE (02 6333)

York Theatre  
*The Thoughts of Chairman Alf* Warren  
Marrill. (over main stage) 9-27 Jan  
Dramaclub  
Surrendered by Adlai Pageant, with Olive Rodi  
and Anthony Wheeler. Director: Anthony  
Wheeler. From 15 Jan

## SUMMERTIME YOUTH CENTRE

(0255)  
2 week course Mon. - Fri. 10-5 study at the  
National Institute of Dramatic Art. Workshop  
with dance, music, drama and improvisation

## STATE THEATRE COMPANY INTERIM

PROGRAMME (02 1411)  
At the Opera House  
*The Cherry Girl* by French West. Director:  
Jim Morrison, with Ruby Kavan. From 27 Jan

## SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE (0255)

*Enchanted Kingdom* — an exhibition of children's  
historical costume books and toys. To 19 Jan

## THEATRE ROYAL (02 1411)

*The Red Before White* in Roy Thomson Lane,  
Director: Lindsay Anderson, starring Rachel  
Roberts. From 17 Jan

For entries please contact Candy Baker on  
317 3309

## QUEENSLAND

## ARTS THEATRE (06 2444)

*Love's and Other Strangers* by Bruce Taylor  
and Joseph Bologna. Director: Kim Leeson  
*The Sherry Billy Green Grog* — a Brown Savage  
production. 2 Jan to 26 Jan. 10.15 am and 2.00  
pm

BRISBANE ACTORS COMPANY at the  
CONSERVATORIUM THEATRE (048 1678)  
*The Woman From the Street* Director:  
Bruce Pitt with Virginia Flowers

*Midnight's Last Motion* by George Fredson.  
Director: David Chackman, with David  
Chackman and Virginia Flowers. To 26 Jan

For entries contact Don Davidson on 368 2848

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## Q THEATRE (02 14011)

*Billy Liar* by Waterhouse and Hall. Director: Ed  
O'Day. Fri and Sat 29 Dec. 27 Jan

For entries contact Chris Johns on 224 4648

## VICTORIA

## ALEXANDER THEATRE (043 3611)

*Four For Children* holiday show. Director:  
Brian Cummins. 10 am and 3 pm Mon. To Sat  
and 2 pm To 17 Jan

## ARCA CHILDREN'S THEATRE (04567)

Contact theatre for details of special holiday  
shows

## AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP

(047 7133)  
From Factory. To be announced

## COMEDY THEATRE (043 4953)

*The Laughing* by William Douglas. Hosts  
Serving George Whelan, John McArthur,  
Frank Thang. Director: George Whelan

## CREATIVE ARTS THEATRE (03 6242)

Community based theatre working in schools,  
libraries and community centres. Telling the  
truth

#### FLYING TRAMPER CAFE (01 372)

A Fly From Starting Alan Fordland, Stephen Vizard, Ruth Schenckman. Also special Sit was celebrations. Late shows with John Heywards and John Hanks and other surprise acts.

#### INDOPLA THEATRE FOUNDATION

(02 764)

Telesubmitted.

#### MR MAJESTY'S THEATRE (02 311)

Amos. Sailing Naga Gordon. 18 February. Directors: Gordon and Bill Hill Maitland.

#### LAST LAUGH THEATRE RESTAURANT

(07 6126)

J & S Shows. Three Rock and Three Wave. Reginald Jubine Maitland.

#### MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

(04 408)

Busset Street. Over a Cuckoo by Mary O'Malley. Directors: Ray Lander, with Vivian Davis, Christine Amor, Katy Wild, Marion Edwards, Jennifer Watt, Judith McGrath, Robert Swan, Matthew King, David Latch. To 28 Jan.

Busset by James Saunders. Director: Bruce Mylen. From 21 Jan.

Afternoon. Arrows and Old Love by Joseph Kneading. Director: Simon Chivers. To 19 Jan. Journey's End by B C Stewart. Director: Mick Ridge. From 16 Jan. Treasury Productions new workshops season to be announced.

#### MIXED COMPANY (04 667)

Amos Theatre. Fencer A Good After. Claude Brown.

Polka Theatre (04 663)

Global Adventure puppet show. 10 am and 2 pm daily.

#### PLORIN PUPPET THEATRE (01 645)

Plorin. New season directed by Graham Bell. To 15 and 2.30 Tues to Fri. 2.00 Sat.

#### PULPLOT PUPPETS (01 312)

Multicultural puppet theatre with Mogg the Cat and friends. Training school and community centre.

#### PRINCESS THEATRE (02 791)

Shopping. Ready on Jan. To early Feb.

#### STAGE DOOR THEATRE RESTAURANT

Also the Goodnight Sergeant Major.

#### TENT SHOW, Bannan Avenue (03 499)

The Playmakers. From To 8 Feb.

#### TIKKI AND JOHNS THEATRE LOUNGE

(03 178)

Tikki and John Newman, Myrtle Roberts, Vic Gordon and guest artists.

#### Arts and Crafts Companies

HIDDLERS REPUBLIC (09 334)

MALVERN THEATRE (03 1 809)

PUMPKIN THEATRE. Richmond (03 813)

1012 THEATRE. Sydney Gully (06 640)

For further contact. Len Carrington on 061 1777.

### TASMANIA

#### TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE (03 796)

International Puppet Festival 1-3 Jan. Company in rehearsal for the rest of Feb.

#### THEATRE ROYAL (04 634)

International Puppet Festival 1-4 Jan. New York Dance Company in double bill with Auditorium Company 2-14 Jan.

For further contact the editorial office on 0616 47-476.

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

#### CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT (09 109)

Five Past 79. Dances, Hal Davies. From 5 Jan.

#### HOLE IN THE WALL (01 343)

No Hop. A revue. Dennis. Edgar Maitland. From 1 Jan.

#### WA ARTS COUNCIL

Training Programme. The Miggins's. Sean. Coach. Regional. Paper. Drama and Military Band. South West. From 27-30 Jan. WA. Helen. Company. South West. From 18-22 Jan.

For further contact. Sean. Ambrose on 299-6519.



# THEATRE AUSTRALIA WISH ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS 1979



### AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

## Theatre Board Grants, 1979: DANCE, DRAMA, PUPPETRY, MIME

The Theatre Board has limited funds available. Its priority in 1979, and limited applications in the following categories:

**Geographical:** for companies, groups or individuals to tour/visit overseas.

**Training:** for professional companies for basic and advanced training programs within Australia.

**Regional:** theatre programs submitted must show both local and State government financial support.

**Living at Life:** for living educational exhibits. Projects may be taught together by individuals, artists or groups participating in development of specific programs.

**Maximum period:** two years, not necessarily.

**Travel/Study:** for full-time professional theatre companies for work or study programs overseas in Australia. Maximum \$10,000 per grant.

**Drama Structure/Theatre Company/Drama School:**

For all levels of training in all genres, professional and non-professional development programs within Australia. For details and application forms contact:

The Secretary,  
Theatre Board,  
Australia Council,  
P.O. Box 268,  
ADRIAN STREET, NSW 2044.  
Tel: (02) 512 3120.

Closing date: 15 February, 1979. Decisions issued by 30 April, 1979.

(Continued from page 2)

## COMMENT

and in worst situations" a point which when coupled with the long-term abuse, oppressive casting and small number of roles in the Drama Theatre make it far from an ideal venue. Most people gratefully accept it as a necessary political evil, but such crippling inadequacies cannot be neatly overlooked.

A major factor in National's success is the intimate and stimulating actor-audience relationship of both its venues, allowing its unique coupling of the classical "theatrical event". Whenever the difficulties about the terms of the bargain, the Seymour Centre it would surely make a much better set-up — and its staff could hardly be more than the reputed 300 members for the Drama Theatre. Significant productions, as scheduled for most of 1979, with contemporary shows interspersed, could maintain the financial and artistic viability of Broadway, whilst use of the Seymour Centre would allow the consolidation of a State Company under a single roof, so vital to its success.

With these very different solutions immediately available, all possible improvements for the foreseeable future would be well from the word go. An experimental studio, already seen as a necessary facility, would be an aid. The alternative situation of offices and two theatres being in three different places is undesirable, wasteful and counter-productive.

A strong team is needed to fight these very battles, a man who can build consensus from diversity, a man who inspires both loyalty and inspiration in artists, and a man who has the personal ability to make a theatre company that has excellence and flair. John Bell could be the man for the job.

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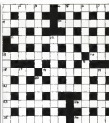
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## THESPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD No 7

Name

Address

Across

- 1 Comparison like me in a game (6)
- 2 Paces about such Edward, but, however (8)
- 3 To get those one leaves the Riviera in a shambles (6)
- 4 Like it, but used for grumpy (6)
- 5 Williamson's weakness (5, 1, 1)
- 6 Phases before Albert to get weapons and gives the alert (5, 5)
- 7 Good man, in first class form for next building (6)
- 8 Thanks, according to postscript (6)
- 9 The PM is hanging — go north, don't (4, 6)
- 10 Learn based post-difficultly for dew (4, 10)
- 11 In night sleep nothing is useful (6)
- 12 Head of the union abandons the resurrected for (6)
- 13 Southern's debutante in a summer cloak (8)
- 14 Reverse role is for leaves and slip (6)

Down

- 1 This castle built a pleasant "bleached" (6)
- 2 Third month will miss place, much to John's chagrin (5, 7)
- 3 Poly face got a crazy country and becomes (6)
- 4 Disregards the quality of not being a vicar (6)
- 5 The poet has nothing in the lounge (6)
- 6 Trade unions (the strict) only only and means some (4, 7)
- 7 Amusement of not too big (6)
- 8 Short PM stop the happy causes disgruntled people (3, 1)
- 9 Method of checking attendance sounds like the city of a bath (4, 6)
- 10 Military division given by job holder's change (7)
- 11 Dark act mad for drink (7)
- 12 In French female a baby lady (6)
- 13 European in Europe-entertainment (6)



Let month's answers.  
 Last month's winner was Hugh Topham of The Gap, NSW.